A COMPANION TO THE

LITERATURES OF COLONIAL AMERICA

EDITED BY SUSAN CASTILLO AND IVY SCHWEITZER



A Companion to the Literatures of Colonial America

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Introduction

Ivy Schweitzer and Susan Castillo

In the course of organizing and editing this companion volume of essays to our anthology, *The Literatures of Colonial America*, we were fascinated to observe the extent to which the field has been transformed. A recent review of several anthologies of material from early America calls *The Literatures of Colonial America* "comparativist," opining that it offers "perhaps the most ambitious definition of 'America': a firmly hemispheric one," and embraces a "structuralist" methodology, through its emphasis on genre, recurring patterns, and "a deeper structural relationship to the Other" (White and Drexler 2004: 730, 743–4). We happily embrace the labels "comparativist" and ambitiously "hemispheric"; and indeed, an attention to structures, rhetoric, and forms "may be our best (or at least our *first*) theoretical means for understanding the hemisphere" (p. 744). We have also been mindful of historical, epistemological, and geographical contexts and have pushed beyond discourses of difference that ground the West's conception of "otherness" to a more thoroughly intersubjective view of New World encounters.

Given our concern with recognizing the multicultural and multilingual character of American literature, we wanted to further unsettle the proto-nationalist paradigm this approach implies. Early American literature should not "be only the prehistory to 'real' American literature" (Gould 2003: 308), nor should it merely provide archival material for literary or social history. We sought to expand "America" from the British Atlantic coastal colonies which eventually become the 13 states and later the United States, to include the Americas more broadly conceived: New Spain, New France, New Amsterdam, and other European colonial settlements in North America, Canada, and Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. The occasion of this publication of a collection of critical essays as a companion to our anthology affords us the opportunity to explain how we understand the label "comparativist" and what we envision as the future shape of a field Ralph Bauer has so well defined, helped to establish, and designated "comparative colonial Americas studies" (Bauer 2003: 283).

The comparativism we envision is part of the global, transatlantic, transnational, and hemispheric turn in American studies, both in terms of the objects of our inquiries and how we think about those materials. This approach studies differences and discontinuities as well as similarities and continuities among a shifting host of often unequal players: colonial cultures of different regions, languages, and ethnicities evolving at different rates; colonial and indigenous cultures at various moments in the tumultuous history of their encounters; various contentious parties within colonial cultures; and colonial, eventually creole subjects and neo-imperial cultures. What we loosely call "literature," encompassing oral and written forms, popular and elite modes, privately written and publicly printed artifacts, histories, treaties, and *belles lettres*, expresses a wide range of "literacies" and encompasses the sometimes parallel, sometimes incongruous and discontinuous experiences of pre-contact, colonial and American subjects.

Recent scholarship has reinforced the impossibility of understanding the evolving literatures and cultures of early America without two important contexts: first, their dynamic confrontations with a rich and wide variety of indigenous cultures, languages, and oral literatures, and second, the European imperial and circum-atlantic contexts from which they emerged. New native histories ask us to examine native American cultures across a wide spatial sweep but also across a long temporal axis that includes pre-contact indigenous cultures and literatures, and to examine the ways our very representation and inclusion of indigenous materials in anthologies force them to conform to European American geographies, temporalities, and epistemologies. Scholars confirm that the early modern period in England and France and the Golden Age in Spain and Portugal, as well as the shifting hostilities and politics of the imperial powers, not only shape the diverse experiences of colonizer and colonized, but are also shaped in turn by the profound effects the "new world" had in a myriad of ways on the "old." Understanding the East–West relationship of "metropole" and "periphery" is also necessary to disclose and unsettle the effects of European ideas and aesthetics on the evolution of specifically colonial and creole subjectivities, which were responding as well to the presence of indigenous cultures and the pressure of hemispheric cross-currents. Walter Mignolo (2000), for example, examines the complex dynamics of interaction between differing local narratives, whether European or American, some with pretensions to universality, others attempting to resist, appropriate, and subvert competing narratives.

Finally, there is the issue of language, the status of translations, and the way comparativist and hemispheric approaches challenge the very nature of our profession. Although we are committed to studying and enhancing awareness of the multilingual nature of early American literatures, our anthology did not include texts in their original language because of pragmatic considerations. Although the use of texts in translation is not uncontentious, we feel it is important to begin to expand the canon for Anglophone readers so they can become aware of the existence of fascinating and powerful texts from other linguistic traditions. The ideal solution would be to provide both the text in the original language and the English translation, but

considerations linked to the economics of publishing and restrictions on word length ruled this out. We hope that the use of electronic resources will make this sort of genuinely multilingual approach viable. Where possible, the contributions to this Companion present citations from primary texts in their original languages, followed by translations.

This collection of essays is intended as both a critical companion to *The Literatures of Colonial America* as well as a broad introduction to the field of early American and comparative colonial studies. Essays are keyed to texts in our anthology, but also refer to works we did not or could not include, and which can be found in other anthologies of this period, and in the growing digital archives and electronic resources of primary documents in the field. The essays discuss major issues shaping the field today, and help contextualize early texts by situating them in relation to broader historical and cultural movements and moments, such as theories of colonialism, imperial projects, the dynamics of diaspora, hybridity, and nation formation, specific literary contexts, and a variety of critical approaches. We were especially concerned to highlight the various intersections between native, formerly non-scribal groups, and Europeans, which have shaped early American cultures. The particularly hemispheric insights of these essays are driven by a sense that the prism of the nation/state conceived in teleological terms has become an increasingly inadequate conceptual model for the study of early US or later Latin American literatures.

Part one of the Companion, "Issues and Methods," addresses the current states of the field and various approaches to defining and reading early American writing. Teresa Toulouse leads off with a meditation on thinking "Comparison" that offers examples from a broad, interdisciplinary range of scholars to help outline the future of the field and its possibilities as well as limitations. She concludes with a provocative consideration of our "desire" for comparativism that echoes Doris Sommer's Levinasian approach to the field. Joanna Brooks follows with the first of several essays on Native America, and argues for the necessity of reformulating the field of Early American studies in terms of native perspectives and interpretive frameworks. Ralph Bauer proposes a related intervention in the form of a shift from conventional "literary history" to "cultural geography," using narratives of vice-regal New Spain to resituate the diversity of colonial American literatures. Michelle Burnham asks probing questions about the transnational economic contexts of early American writing, while Paul Giles approaches the transatlantic nature of British colonial culture through an examination of the complex interaction of theology and aesthetics. The final two essays in part one focus specifically on pedagogy: Michael Clark echoes our position by grounding the disciplinary and pedagogical coherence of the field in the language and rhetorical contexts of texts, while Edward Gallagher surveys pedagogical opportunities held out by the use of new technologies.

Part two, "New World Encounters," considers various interactions between cultural groups during the early centuries of exploration and settlement. Timothy Powell argues for the importance of pre-contact literatures in expanding our knowledge of early contact and intertextuality, while Renée Bergland uses the resonant trope of the

Toltec mirror to suggest how native, European, and creole subjects imagined each other, and Bethany Schneider considers the dynamics of Indian response and resistance to a wide spectrum of European and colonial rhetoric. Electa Arenal and Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel refocus our attention on the rich literary culture of New Spain and the role of women and gender, while Andrew Hadfield uses visual images to argue for a link between the British colonial project in Ireland and America. The often-obscured colonial history and assimilationist policy of New France is the subject of Sara Melzer's essay. In a similar vein, Elena Losada Soler surveys the place of Brazil and discourses of otherness in the early writing on cross-cultural encounter, and Derek Hughes considers the Caribbean as the site of New World ethnography, which ironically refracts the less savory aspects of the Old World.

Part three, "Negotiating Identities," examines the development of regional spheres of influence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Raquel Chang-Rodríguez documents the often ignored role of women in her account of the emergence of gendered creole voices in literary Lima and Mexico. Viviana Díaz Balsera narrates Sor Juana Inés' complex negotiations with indigenous culture in the remarkable prelude to her religious drama, *The Divine Narcissus*. Coining the phrase "Hemispheric Americanism," Rodrigo Lazo describes the diffusion of Northern notions of revolution and democracy and their adoption or rejection by Southern exiles and patriots, while Douglas Anderson examines the contours of the Anglo-American literary imagination during long eighteenth century. Using the work of Bakhtin and Glissant, Gesa Mackenthun examines the rivalry between novel and epic in what she calls the "transoceanic" formation of post-Revolutionary American identities.

We conceived of the essays in part four, which highlights the major genres and writers of the early period, as a series of "Cross-Cultural Conversations." This call elicited a wide range of "comparativist" approaches. Thomson Shields investigates the complex dynamics of exploration and conquest narratives. Looking from New Spain to New England, Lisa Gordis and Hilary Wyss consider, respectively, the conversion narrative and its wider literary implications, and what Wyss dubs "indigenous literacies." Focusing on the Protestant tradition in North America, Gregory Jackson surveys the influential history of the sermon and its relation to politics, class issues, gender, and race. The fascinating domain of epistolarity is the subject of Phillip Round's comparative account. Studying a related genre, the personal narrative, Kathleen Donegan offers comparative "cases" that illustrate how the form challenges prevailing notions of the "literary." Using Derek Attridge's ideas on otherness and creativity, Lisa Logan explores the idea of "collaborative authorship" in order to shed new light on the well-worked genre of the captivity narrative.

Considering the more canonical forms, José Antonio Mazzotti takes traditional literary analysis to task for ignoring the important dialectic between the creole writers of Mexico and Peru, while Amy Morris considers the particularly colonial, and thus displaced and paradoxical, character of the religious lyric in New England, with glimpses at Mexico. Kathryn Gray uses the spectacle of animals as a lens through which to trace the discourses of natural science from the early explorations to the

eighteenth century. A survey of eyewitness accounts allows Jerry Williams to examine the discursive strategies and contradictory effects of New World historiography. Finally, Elizabeth Dillon rejects a nationalist framework for reading early Anglo-American drama, arguing that the performance history in America of the English writer Joseph Addison's popular play *Cato* is part of a broad transatlantic web of political, economic, and cultural relations, and Winfried Fluck interrogates the process by which consumers of the early North American novel "read" themselves, and the fledgling nation, into forms of cultural individualization.

Clearly, the new configuration of the field of comparative colonial studies will stretch us all as scholars and render existing disciplinary boundaries increasingly obsolete. This kind of intellectual approach, then, is not for the faint-hearted; it involves a willingness to wade into areas in which we are not and may never be experts. Nevertheless, the kinds of cross-cultural "conversations" we study in our circum-atlantic, comparative, and hemispheric readings provide models for the cross- and interdisciplinary work we hope to enable and foster, here among scholars from America's Northern and Southern hemispheres as well as Scotland, England, Spain, Portugal, and Germany. While much remains to be explored, we offer this Companion in the hopes of enriching the teaching and understanding of early American and colonial literatures.

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PART ONE
Issues and Methods



"Map of the new Islands which for varying considerations they call Western or Indian." From *Munster's Geography*, third edition, 1550. Reprinted by permission of the Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens, Georgia. Notice the region called "Canibali" on the northeast coast of South America.

1

Prologomenal Thinking: Some Possibilities and Limits of Comparative Desire

Teresa A. Toulouse

In the mid-1970s, for the first time ever, I flew into Paris instead of London for the beginning of a summer vacation. After two weeks in France, I took the boat-train to a London that had become strangely decentered as either a linguistic or a cultural "home." Starting in France rather than England made me aware phenomenologically, one could say, of "Europe" as a map consisting of numerous juxtapositions rather than as a space hierarchically arranged by my usual English point of entry to it.

Though it took longer, something similar began to happen to my sense of the United States after more than a decade of intermittent travel and language study in Mexico and Guatemala. Living and studying abroad – yet so close to the US – decentered my sense of "my" country as *the* ordering space from which I went forth and reconstructed it as a space among other spaces. Imaginatively, the US became only part, if a large part, of a broader space which, for want of another word, I came to feel as and to call "hemispheric."

This imagined sense of a different kind of locatedness and connectedness is hard to maintain when travelers return, after all, to where they live instead of visit. However, it has become increasingly easy in a Louisiana that continues to be and to be variously constructed as a (peculiar) space of diasporic contacts, combinations, and dominations, European, but not, Caribbean, but not, African, but not, and (since 1803) "US" – but not. Rather than simply "experiencing" Louisiana as some kind of hemispheric entrepôt or even as a kind of continental hinge, however, it became increasingly incumbent on me, I felt, to understand how and why it could or should be interpreted as such. What were the possibilities and the problems opened by this kind of reading? What might be concealed as well as revealed by it? The Early Ibero/Anglo Americanist Summit conference in Tucson in June 2002 provided an opportunity to think on several levels about the kinds of questions one might ask to engage the desire of/for hemispheric comparison.

Recently, the concept of transnationalism has become part of one conversation in American studies that seeks a re/turn to comparativism in the analysis of the making and breaking of modern nation-states (Rowe 2000). Intrigued by current scholarly attempts to define and to explain globalism in post-nationalist terms, colonialists across the Americas have been concerned with historical moments and spaces that in many ways *precede* transnational scholars' reliance on a concept of the modern nation-state and its breakup. In this sense, they are interested in how one might conceive a *pre-* as opposed to a *post*-nationalist study of the Americas (although, importantly, in given instances, the two may and should intersect). Furthermore, even as they acknowledge that constructions of "Europe" and the "globe" will invariably enter into "hemispheric" constructions as well, many colonialists maintain that *how* these constructions are understood and related to one another will be different when they are set comparatively in different temporal and spatial frames (Mignolo 1995). Clearly, if colonialists feel uncomfortable about entirely relinquishing the time of the pre-nation to the time of the post, they also feel uncomfortable about yielding *any* notion of the "hemispheric" to a "global" spatial frame without exploring some of this notion's own heuristic values and limits at this moment.

I say "at this moment" because obviously, as Ralph Bauer (2003a) has most comprehensively demonstrated, there have been numerous past attempts at reading the "Americas" in a hemispheric and comparative way. As Bauer and others have suggested, however, many of these modes of comparison proved problematic for at least two broad reasons. If Herbert Bolton in the 1930s attempted to compare the "Americas," it was with an eye towards explaining why North America had come to outstrip Latin and South America both politically and economically (Bolton 1933; see also Bauer 2003b). For Bolton, comparison was predetermined by an invidious US notion of what was "progressive" and what was not. In a similar manner, many historians concerned with the "flowering" of national(ist) literatures or cultures in the "Western" hemisphere have often used the colonial period only as the "seed-time" of their overarching narratives of national development. While comparison in this instance could importantly involve interrogating similarities or differences among already existent American narratives of national "birth," no one as yet has written such a comparative history of the historiography of the Americas (Gustafson 2003). Furthermore, even this focus, which still depends on the dominant frame of the "nation," would not explicitly fall on comparing the specificities and contingencies of *colonial* moments and spaces. Both during and after the Tucson conference, its participants expressed a desire to develop non-hierarchical as well as non-nationalist driven ways of thinking colonial comparison in the Americas.

The appearance of several new comparative literary anthologies, including *The Literatures of Colonial America*, underscores the current wish to imagine more adequate models of comparative analysis across the hemisphere (Jehlen and Warner 1997; Mulford, Vieto, and Winans 2002). In what follows, I sketch out two modes of analysis that literary scholars interested in hemispheric comparison might wish to interrogate. Drawing broadly on the work of a number of scholars, I consider some

possible shapes that hemispheric comparisons might take. In so doing, I wish to make the case that the new comparative *literary* anthologies are in effect calling for new kinds of comparative interdisciplinary *histories* of the colonial Americas. Throughout these comments, I suggest that such comparative projects also assume and anticipate largely unwritten contextualizing *theories* that would help to explain and to justify them. Arising out of a new desire to compare cultural phenomena across colonial space(s), they especially reveal the need to develop new theories of causality.

Comparative and/or Comparable Histories

Part of what surely is driving the need to juxtapose colonial texts across the colonial Americas is a renewed and a new sense of the range of historical commonalities informing them. Such commonalities, both traditionally and conceptually parsed out to a variety of different subdisciplines within history, have included, for example:

1 The European political and economic backgrounds that give rise to certain reasons and justifications for voyages of contact and conquest.
2 The nature and fact of the conquest of native peoples by Europeans and their own mutual and different resistances and accommodations to its aftermath.
3 The varying conditions and systems of enforced servitude imposed on Native Americans and persons of African descent in relation to 1 and 2.
4 The reorganization and deployment of different understandings of identity that arise out of combinations of 1–3. (Here I am thinking of how European and indigenous understandings of conquest and enforced servitude reconfigure notions of identity for colonizers, colonized, and a wide variety of differentially "hybridized" groups.)
5 The older and newer cultural products and practices that are brought to bear on 1–4 and in turn influence, reshape, create, or become discarded in relation to 1–4.

What might be the value of comparing any one of these five commonalities, singly or in combination, across a range of colonial moments and spaces? Most generally, such comparison might free colonialists from developmental narratives of national exceptionalism by allowing them both to see similarities they have not seen before, and to speculate on their hemispheric as well as their local repercussions in the "New" World.

One thinks, for example, of Djelal Kadir's (1992) work on a pan-European interest in prophecy and millennialism. Trained to think about prophecy simply in English or New English terms, I had thought neither about the common millennial impulse informing and justifying European "discovery," conquest, and colonization, nor about the roles played by other kinds of prophecy in different indigenous groups' interpretation of their encounters with Europeans. Comparative analysis of European as well as indigenous religious frames could clearly rewrite current interpretations of different

local phenomena across a range of colonial spaces. At the same time, this kind of analysis might also rewrite older generalizations about other hemispheric commonalities. For instance, how might Kadir's focus on prophecy as a European cultural commonality transform traditional readings of a pan-colonial economic phenomenon like mercantilism, rewriting mercantilism in its relation to a shared *symbolic* economy? Clearly, comparing colonial cultural commonalities could lead to a reshaping of assumptions not only about the local, but also about shared colonial "systems."

As historian Richard White has suggested, comparing and relating cultural and economic phenomena like those suggested above might also, just as easily, support claims about local colonial exceptionalisms, not by recourse to a looking back from the point of the "nation," however, but within specifically conflicted colonial moments and spaces themselves (White 1999). One might ask, for example, how comparative work that locates similarities between enforced slavery in the Caribbean and plantation slavery in North America could be nuanced or changed by an examination of the *differences* between these systems and that of the *encomienda* in much of the rest of the Caribbean and "Latin" America. While comparison of different local situations may yield a new awareness of the larger shared and intersecting systems at work in them, it may also reveal locally exceptional qualities whose meanings and ramifications might have been unrecognized were comparisons with other colonial situations not engaged. Detached from traditional narratives of nationalism, specifically *colonial* commonalities and *colonial* exceptionalisms can show up differently.

At the same time that each of the commonalities on my list can be described as a historical feature of colonialism in the Americas as a whole, each might also be construed as providing a *theoretical* mode whereby the others can be organized. If this is true *within* a given colonial time, it could also be true comparatively *across* colonial situations. For a certain kind of Marxist historian, for example, a particular concept of the economic might be the point of entry that organizes all other commonalities; for a liberal political historian, a concern about the meaning and transformation of a concept such as "sovereignty" as it pertains to New World political organization might provide the means of framing other colonial organizational practices. Clearly, one might choose (as I obviously did in yoking the political and economic in the first commonality I listed) to pair more than one feature as a combined point of entry into the others. These moves are never uninterested – they invariably involve explicit or implicit theories about why one chooses one commonality as *the* explanatory frame for the others. Whether comparison leads to similarities or differences, to parallelisms, to shared influences or to overarching systems, comparison invariably depends on the modes of entry that at once enable and condition it.

The "Difference" of Social History

Nothing illustrates this realization better than the "new" social history. For the past three decades, social history has both nuanced and rewritten other forms of historical

inquiry by arguing that historical claims made along broadly economic, political, or cultural lines are inadequate unless they address the ways in which such claims are related to social *difference*. One type of social history began by writing histories of women, people of color, lower (or higher) "status" groups, locally, regionally, or comparatively, with similar groups in their countries of origin. Other historians quickly turned to relating and comparing the similarities and differences that emerged once they considered more than one social difference. Take the example of gender as it pertains to my own area of study, colonial New England. Histories of New English women, once largely presented as ethnically and culturally homogeneous, have been supplemented by histories of the similarities and differences *among* colonial women, whether of status, of ethnic or racial origin, or religion (Ulrich 1982; Berkin 1996; Cott 2000). More recently, critical consideration of the temporal/spatial frame of colonial "British America" is directing scholarly attention to historical similarities and contrasts among different social groups across a range of Anglophone spaces in North America and the Caribbean (Greene and Pole 1984). Finally, the current concern with describing and analyzing a fluid "Atlantic world" is moving studies of the relationships among these groups to even more diverse global networks of exchange (Canny 1999; Kidd 1999).

One goal of a distinctly "hemispheric" history would be to relocate the comparative focus of such studies, still in my examples so obviously Anglo-centered, to a more specifically hemispheric matrix. While scholars would necessarily bring to bear the political, economic, and cultural circumstances and influences of different European or African "mother" countries or regions on such comparison, the focus here would fall on making *cross-hemispheric* comparisons of external influences on internal local conditions, rather than on describing only one colonial situation or bolstering exceptionalist narratives relying on centers outside the hemisphere. A number of approaches are emerging. In North American studies, for example, new studies are analyzing and comparing how Native Americans manipulated trade and politics across a wide variety of colonial Euro *and* Indian groups and spaces (Cayton and Teute 1998; Dowd, 2002). Of similar interest is new work on Catholic nuns that will allow for comparative analysis of how organized, even interracial, women's religious groups gained and deployed social and political power across a range of sites in colonial Canada, Louisiana, and Mexico (Clark and Gould 2002). Such comparisons of single groups across hemispheric spaces invariably involve their intersections with other groups at specific moments and sites. The study of "contact zones," the "borders" and "frontiers" where different groups come together and complexly intersect, has clearly proved to be an extremely fruitful area of comparison for numerous colonial scholars (White 1991; Pratt 1992; Usner 1992). But, as the work of Latin Americanist Walter Mignolo and Anglo-Americanist Ralph Bauer has recently demonstrated, the study of diverse social exchanges at discrete locales surely calls for more "pluritopic" interpretation of such interactions across the hemisphere rather than in one region alone (Mignolo1995; Bauer 2004).

Comparative studies of contact zones lay the ground for other kinds of cross-local, cross-regional comparisons as well – whether they trace similar influences, locate parallels, or interrogate similarities or differences responding to the interplay of larger social, economic, or political conditions and systems. While comparing "contact zones" within the Americas might reveal hemispheric *patterns* of colonial cultural and economic exchange, production, and domination that provide historical alternatives to narratives offered by exceptionalist national histories, comparisons of explicitly native behaviors might contribute to a new history of precisely the different (or similar) ways in which indigenous groups, widely separated in space, have interpreted and manipulated Euro-colonials to their own survival or destruction. Such inquiry would certainly contest as well as add to local studies of the "hybrid" identities that emerge as a result of colonization.

While its earlier preoccupations remain of comparative interest, the new social history quickly branched in directions other than those involving the recovery or even the comparative history of groups other than Euro-males. If colonial studies, like other areas of historical and cultural inquiry, has moved to criticize intellectual, political, economic, and even cultural history for its lack of conscious attention to the role of social difference in or outside of such histories, its own turn to comparing these differences has contributed to the project of determining how *categories* of social difference, not simply social difference as uninterrogated essence, have informed past history and (should) inform current historical inquiry as well. This interest has led to questions about the *discursive* intersections by means of which differentiating categories like religion, race, gender, and so forth come into being and are historically understood, related, and deployed in a wide variety of cultural products and practices. Comparative discourse analysis also clearly provides an exciting area of inquiry for those concerned with a hemispherically located colonial American studies.

Comparative "Americas" and/as Discourse

The project of examining categories of social difference points colonial scholars who desire a comparative hemispheric history in at least two broad directions. On the one hand, it demands comparative study of the *construction* of groups *as* different within culturally available discourses. On the other hand, it also involves claims about the *configuration* these differences assume at specific historical moments in specific colonial spaces. In fascinating cross-disciplinary work on sites as diverse as pre-revolutionary Haiti in the eighteenth century and late seventeenth-century New England, literary scholars and historians like Joan Dayan (1995) and Jill Lepore (1998) have rewritten older political and religious histories of these regions by examining both the variety of discursive practices (dominant and non-dominant, textual and non-textual) through which colonized and colonizing peoples and their actions are constructed and contested, and the effects of these discursive practices on violent and non-violent activities.

Interestingly, while both of these projects obviously engage constructions of categories of difference – especially of ethnic difference – by a number of colonized and colonizing groups, their focus on analyzing the intersections of multiple discursive practices at specific moments has displaced the centrality of any one construction of difference as the only point of entry into interpretation and understanding. Both scholars instead suggest that what is most significant in a given historical instance are the configurations shaped by many mutually informing, even if mutually contradicting, discourses. In offering us glimpses of the ways in which discourses of say, race, gender, economics, politics, and religion unevenly combine in producing and sustaining revolts in very different American spaces, these texts offer new possibilities of rereading such New World phenomena as indigenous and slave uprisings in comparative terms. It remains to be seen whether comparison of the discursive configurations helping to produce resistance, revolt, or even conscious revolution in different colonial spaces will locate parallels, trace as yet unknown influences, or make claims about a multi-regional construction of forms of counter-conquest. Work like that of Dayan and Lepore open up these stimulating comparative questions.

Study of the *shapes* that specific intersections of colonial discourses take as textual products or cultural practices raises the important question of the relationship between discourse analysis and traditional studies of rhetoric. Many continental European scholars, peninsular scholars, and scholars of Latin American and South American cultural history have maintained an interest in the ways in which specifically Old World *rhetorical* theories and representational practices have been brought to bear on construction of the New World. For such readings, it is not enough simply to locate and describe intersections of social discourses at work in a given colonial activity or expression. One must also be cognizant of how European understandings of and uses of classical rhetoric and genres, especially the rhetoric of history, informed such discourses, singly or in combination (Greene 1999; Bauer 2003b; Boruchoff 2003).

As the example of third-generation New England minister Cotton Mather demonstrates, colonial writers across the hemisphere, whatever their differences in religion, shared an interest in classical rhetoric. In his 1699 history of a decade-long series of Indian wars, *Decennium Luctuosum*, and in his 1702 ecclesiastical history of the New English colonial project, *Magnalia Christi Americana*, Mather self-consciously points to his debts to classical historians such as Livy, Tacitus, and others in not only framing colonial events, but also in constructing and understanding categories of social difference. (His Indians are "Scythians," for example, and his heroic colonial women are "Amazons.") In Mather's case, this sense of indebtednesss to classical rhetoric and its role in producing New World phenomena in particular ways can be seen not only at the macro level of genre, but also at the micro level of style itself. In his own moment, he was both applauded and derided for his excessive classicism, as style and changes in style became arenas in which conflict over colonial transformations in religious, political, and cultural affiliations were also played out (Silverman 1984).

In addition to raising new comparative questions about similar and different colonial uses of classic rhetoric and the ramifications for native peoples of its

hemispheric deployment through say, printing, educational systems, and religious proselytizing, scholars need to address new questions about the transformation or breakdown of such traditional European rhetorical modes. Even as these modes are brought to bear on socially, religiously, economically, or politically informed discursive combinations, they also change and new forms emerge in response to and in conflict with local New World forms. While one line of scholarly inquiry has attempted to interpret reasons behind transformations and/or breakdowns of European and local forms, the other has been more focused on the nature and function of these newer forms themselves. Whereas the one is concerned with asking how different political, religious, economic, or social understandings contribute to the use and the transformation of both Euro-rhetorical modes and local performances, for example, the other has addressed specific questions about the social/cultural roles played by fragmented or mixed forms themselves. While the one may ask about the derivations of particular forms (diasporic, indigenous or otherwise, for example), the other might ask, what does it mean to argue that a given form seems "hybrid," "liminal," "syncretic," or "creole"? What are the limitations of such terms for describing and understanding local and international responses to colonial practices? Do these terms even mean the same thing? Both forms of inquiry have increasingly concerned themselves with the circumstances under which the same forms could be appropriated and used both within and between colonial groups that were socially differentiated. These kinds of questions, now asked singly, of individual local forms, writers, and performers, should now be asked comparatively as having great bearing on colonialists' desire to engage with the similarities and differences of hemispheric cultural productions, struggles, and identities (Bhabha 1994; Hogan 2000).

The reason for posing questions about the interrelations of traditional rhetoric and local forms is theoretical as well as historical. The act of locating and even comparing discursive formations seems somehow not comparative enough. Work on the interrelations of culturally available discourses of religion, politics, economics, gender, ethnicity, and so forth that operate cross-colonially needs to engage the similar or different rhetorical models or similar or different modes of local representation and performance that frame, critically respond to, or themselves help to sustain certain discursive combinations. At the same time, as the limitations of earlier conceptions of comparative literature have usefully demonstrated, simple comparison of colonial and indigenous rhetorical or other formal modes, whether "hybrid" or not, seems equally inadequate. Clearly, if discourse analysis also demands some kind of formal analysis, formal analysis must also engage discourse analysis. It is in the intersection of the two that we can see not only *that* similar or different cultural forms are retained, discarded, or become differentially mixed, but are also forced to speculate about the similar or differing historical conditions of possibility which they engage and to which they respond. For there is a third point to be made here as well.

Take, as Leonard Tennenhouse (2003) has usefully suggested we do, the comparison of the confessional forms used by a seventeenth-century New English minister or a sixteenth-century Mexican "criollo." If, from one angle, this cross-languages com-

parison may address what appear to be similar discourses (say of politics, theology, or even of gender) and yet reveal very *different* formal features, from another angle, even their *similar* formal features may in fact be products of different discursive intersections that have occurred in response to very different sets of *historical* variables. Examination of the discourses shaping and shaped by either genre may, in short, yield differences in purported similarities as much as it yields similarities within ostensible differences. As Borges' mad narrator Pierre Menard so persuasively demonstrates, to write *Don Quixote* in modern Argentina, even if one seems merely – if agonizingly – to copy it, is, in fact, to write a text that is at once related to, but also very different from, the Cervantes text even as it appears to look exactly the same. Thus, inevitably, in spite of formal similarities or similarities of available discourses, we are driven to theorize different *historical* conditions of possibility expressed, but never in their totality, by particular relationships of discourses and form.

Space and Time: Modeling Hemispheric Comparisons Colonially

American historian Richard White has drawn on French *Annales* historian Henri Lefebvre to suggest that historians approach a given historical phenomenon as at once closed and open, quasi-autonomous, but clearly conditioned by (and itself conditioning) a number of other spatial phenomena (Lefebvre 1991; White, 1999). Lefebvre's example is the modern house: while we can see/experience a house's concrete form, it is also porous to and networked by local, regional, national, and transnational levels. White's own example focuses on a contemporary ecological issue, current salmon fishing in Northwest America. Like Lefebvre's house, salmon fishing may seem an autonomous local act, but it, too, is crossed by a range of competing and contradictory spatial interests, local, regional, national, and international.

According to White, the key to an enlarged historical understanding should lie in the interpreter's willingness to see that both these conditions (semi-autonomy and porousness) inhere in all cultural products and practices, and to realize that whatever single story the historian tells to explain a given arrangement of these levels will always be limited without considering it in relation to other stories. The trick, he suggests, may be to reconstruct a number of synchronous stories, rather than choosing one as *the* only reading of the "meaning" of an event or practice. Notes White, "Lefebvre points the way to a history that does not have to choose among local, regional, national, and transnational, but can establish shifting relations among them" (White 1999: 979).

Both White and Lefebvre draw their examples from the practices and products of modernity. How might students of colonialism read *colonial* products, practices, and subjectivities as particularly closed and porous, regional and crossed by spaces other than the region? Given their interest in hemispheric comparison, should colonialists not also ask, what role might a level specifically conceived *as* hemispheric play in relation to other local and global spaces? We could address questions about direct or indirect

influences, parallelisms, or shared regional responses to overarching economic, political, and social and cultural systems through a model that examines the shifting and *differential* understandings of numerous spatial interests engaged in a given local act.

Once again, for the explicit purposes of a comparative colonial history of the Americas, recent work on Haiti proves suggestive. Charles Arthur and Michael Dash, editors of *A Haiti Anthology: Libète* (1999), set out to represent Haitian history as the product of a variety of "contexts, ideas, and cultural artifacts." In contrast to standard collections of scholarly essays on similar or different aspects of Haitian history, this anthology juxtaposes a wide variety of texts, both scholarly and popular, "high" cultural and "low," in order to present numerous routes into and through major issues in Haitian history. Broad thematic units which allow for the juxtaposition of a variety of responses include, for example, "Colonialism and Revolution," "The Status Quo: Elites, Soldiers, and Dictators," "Rural Haiti," "Poverty and Urban Life," "Popular Religion and Culture," and "The View from Abroad." Each of these broad themes loosely frames a number of possible textual and non-textual responses to it, while at the same time refusing to offer itself as "the" interpretive key to "a" Haitian history.

The model of regional history as thematic montage clearly offers an intriguing way to configure "Haiti" as the product of multiple New World events and interpretations without losing the specificity of "Haiti" as place. One could imagine what Arthur and Dash do for Haiti being done individually for a variety of New World regions. Once completed, for purposes of comparison, individual regional "anthologies" could then either be collected together or, more intriguingly, reconfigured in terms of shared and different themes to which a variety of texts and performance traditions *across* the hemisphere respond.

White's multi-leveled historical model and the multi-themed model of the *Libeté* editors obviously intersect in the notion of different approaches directed to what only seems a singular phenomenon. Acknowledging what they share, however, it is also important to note how White and Arthur and Dash differ in their conceptions of temporality and space. Organizing their Haiti anthology around interrelated *themes*, Arthur and Dash move *across* historical time, tracing variants of responses to the *same* space at different temporal moments of which the colonial, as it is currently conceived, is only one. White, in contrast, offers a cross-section of spatial levels responding to a particular problem that is temporally as well as spatially located. He suggests that we examine a given problem/event/text/performance and explore the *different* spaces crossing it during the same period of *time*. His approach reminds one of current television weather maps that allow us temporarily (temporally) to freeze the flows of multilayered weather patterns over a particular spatial range so that we can read the varying kinds of spatial relations these patterns assume over a given area during a specific time.

Scholars like Arthur and Dash and White clearly present exciting, if difficult, possibilities for the reconception of a hemispheric intellectual and cultural history that is multivalent, comparative, and non-linear. Each, however, is not without its

possible drawbacks. The Haiti collection, while it is to be commended for the many kinds of responses it brings to bear on its themes, could prove problematic precisely because of its focus on continuing themes over an extended, indeterminate time. The danger here is that linearity of themes would replace the older problem of linearity of narrative. This kind of thinking, while it may complicate space, narrows time and as a result might lead to interpretive claims about the historical "inevitability" of the themes it traces. One thinks here, for example, of the claim that the breakup of the Balkans was "inevitable" given a Serbian religious/cultural/political resentment dating relatively unchanged from the Middle Ages and given, therefore, an unchanging, temporally continuous Serbian "identity." Both sides have used similar language about issues arising form the current conflict in Iraq, describing it as a historically continuous "Crusade" focused on moral issues of "good" and "evil," rather than as arising from a complex of contemporary political, economic, or cultural issues.

On the other hand, one might fault White, first, for not being as sensitive as Arthur and Dash to the multiple responses available *within* each spatial level he touches on as well as *between* them, and secondly, for not offering an expanded or complicated enough sense of time for viewing the interplay of his different spatial levels. Nonetheless, the model that White describes remains extremely suggestive for those interested in hemispheric comparisons, because it provides a way of viewing flows into, across, and within the hemisphere as a whole, which allows one to freeze such flows in order to map their varying relationships at specific temporal moments. In so doing, White's model seems intriguingly to point to the possibility of viewing time as crossed by spaces that, no matter how unevenly, can be viewed as connected, whether they *directly* intersect or not. White's approach points to the need to reconfigure the notion of a "colonial" period in new spatio/temporal ways, not in terms of some homogeneity of shared formal features or discursive configurations, but rather, as Fredric Jameson suggests, as the "sharing of an objective situation to which a whole range of varied responses and creative innovations is then possible, but always within that situation's structural limits" (Jameson 1988: 179).

Bracketing the question of Jameson's own Marxist interpretation of his definition, his defense as well as his description of "periodization" here clearly dovetails with the desire to conceive a new type of *hemispheric* comparison (spatial) that we also wish to call *colonial* (temporal). In this, Jameson's notion of periodization seems neatly to overlap with White's model, in which multiple spatial stories differentially intersect at the same moment. Furthermore, although this is more implicit in White's essay, both he and Jameson are necessarily sensitive to diachrony at the same time that both attend to synchrony. In offering us a way of interpreting cultural phenomena focused on time as well as on space, the work of both scholars allows us to make claims not only about the distinctiveness of hemispheric colonial moments, but also about moments that precede, follow, and intersect with them. In fact, as the metaphor of the endlessly changing weather map suggests, we can *only* see such synchrony – and the kinds of hemispheric spatial relationships it displays – in light of a reconceived diachrony.

While such claims return us, in many ways, to the list of commonalities offered at the beginning of this essay, they also demand a reconfiguration of the notion of commonality, one attentive to the different historical moments of the appearance and/or repetition of a commonality and not simply to the "fact" of commonality itself. What, one might now ask, are the spatial relationships of hemispheric "flows" pertaining at a given historical moment such that what we call a "commonality" shows up? Clearly, even posing the question of similarity this way points not only to the fact that, in our desire for a hemispheric history, we may need to reconfigure colonial space; it also indicates that we may need to reconfigure colonial time.

In standard US intellectual, cultural, and literary histories and anthologies, colonial time as such ends in 1776, while, for a Latin America and South America engaged not only in colonial wars with their "mother" countries, but also in conflicts with US imperial interests, it does not end until the close of the nineteenth century or even later. In all "American" regions, one might comparatively point out, aspects of the colonial condition of indigenous populations arguably continue. Perhaps self-described colonialists might be well served in imagining a number of *different* colonial moments crossed by different spatial levels, rather than assuming an uncomplicated colonial period in relation to a more complicated hemispheric space. Acts of hemispheric comparison could then move between, as well as within, *different* moments in colonial time, as well as across differing hemispheric (and extra-hemispheric) spatial levels. Intriguingly, this multiplication of colonial periods across the hemisphere would not temporally or spatially exclude the space of the nation, but, in given instances, newly engage with it, not as a *stage* only or necessarily *following* some fixed colonial stage, but as a *level* that differentially intersects with a colonial level.

Comparing/Comparative Desire

As North American literary and cultural historian Philip Gould (2003) has rightly pointed out, there are tremendous difficulties attendant upon the imagining of these kinds of conceptual and categorical shifts. Not only is there the question of learning languages in order to do the literary and historical scholarship – French, Spanish, and Portuguese for those of us in English, and indigenous, creole, and African languages, I would suspect, for most of us – there is also the question of the departmental and institutional changes within the humanities and social sciences that would surely accompany changes in notions of disciplinary spaces and periods. Acknowledging this is to admit that a truly comparative, hemispheric colonial studies will not only transform the work colonialists do, but also, it would seem, with whom and under what conditions they do it. What does it mean, as is happening at this moment, that colonial scholars in North American studies and Latin American studies are already teaching, writing essays, organizing conferences, compiling new anthologies, and – significantly – constructing new programs *together*? The fact that new *culturally* focused comparative programs have been implemented at Wesleyan, SUNY Buffalo,

the University of Houston, Vanderbilt, New York University, and elsewhere indicates the presence of a new desire driving colonial studies.

This desire manifests itself above all in the turn to space as an organizing frame. Analysis across newly conceived hemispheric spaces reveals local practices and products neither as readable in the terms of invidious "Western" universalism, nor in the terms of equally problematic theories of essential difference. It allows instead for the *comparison* of how such notions were conceived and deployed within and across a variety of cultural groups. In so doing, comparative analysis can engage exciting new questions about when, where, and under what specific conditions different groups proved able or unable to expand their sense of what was culturally acceptable or includable about other groups.

Consider the work of literary scholars like Steven Mailloux (2000) and Julio Ortega (2003). Distinguishing their analyses from older kinds of formalist comparisons, both scholars have urged that "rhetoric" be reconsidered less as a solely Western expressive medium that conditions all colonial encounters across the hemisphere in determinate and oppressive ways, than as a cross-culturally valued theory of communication which favors concepts such as "dialogue" and "persuasion" over violence. For Mailloux, for example, the culturally specific sophist strand within the Western rhetorical tradition has always privileged an ideal of *communal* negotiation over Platonic notions of "universal" truth and, ideally, has thus included a belief in the capacity of all human beings to persuade and to be persuadable. Ortega seeks to understand the reasons behind early Inca translations of and citations from European humanist Latin texts in the specific site of colonial Peru. Their interest in rhetoric suggests not only the willingness of "creolized" Incas to value and to use the cultural products of another cultural group (even with the end of criticizing that group's behaviors), but also, and crucially, their wish to demonstrate that these values and practices are, in fact, already part of an ongoing Incan cultural history that the Spanish, in spite of colonial violence, have failed to eradicate. In both cases, that of Mailloux and that of Ortega, "rhetoric" provides an avenue for examining possible similarities in cultural values at the same time that it acknowledges cultural differences. Concepts like dialogue, persuasion, and translation do not necessarily mean incorporation into dominant notions of sameness. At the same time, ideally, none of these concepts supports an alterity that is rigidly bounded. Rather, as possible cultural meeting points, such concepts suggest the belief that a conversation – a speaking, not a spoken to – can be kept open.

As Ortega brilliantly suggests, the renewed interest in comparing the ways in which rhetorical encounters and translations, whether open and accommodating, dominant or resistant, take place within and across colonial spaces has implications even beyond the desire to compare how people conceived cultural concepts of sameness and difference across space. Such study has important implications for our understanding of how interpretations of *history* and historical process were constructed and deployed in conflicted colonial spaces as well. Locating comparable cultural values within actual moments of intense, seemingly apocalyptic change

helped different historical actors to explain such changes and to negotiate their new positions, as colonizer, as colonized, as New World "creole," both within and on the other side of them. Comparative study of colonial rhetorical beliefs and practices across a range of sites may not only lead to a more comprehensive understanding of how a multitude of actors read, represented, and used cultural differences and contacts, it may also direct us to the more comparative study of colonial readings of causality.

Yet, in so doing, comparative study of local American readings of causality across space surely points to something more than even a desire to locate and to compare different colonial understandings of history, valuable as such an enterprise might be. Rather, the desire to make colonial history(ies) more open, more contingent, by making them more comparable, indicates our *own* historical moment of dissatisfaction not simply with older models of sameness or difference, but, relatedly, with current historicist models that reduce history to the description of the sum total of power relations, however complex, evident within a given form of the social. These descriptions, whether their focus falls on micro-forms of resistance or macro-forms of oppression, discursive or non-discursive, do not and cannot account for the fact of historical *change* (Copjec 1994). If hemispheric comparison, as my earlier representation of the colonial weather map suggests, will make us broaden and rethink our conception of the often bloody synchronies of colonialism and imperialism, it should necessarily also make us rethink the question of diachrony. Such comparison is desirable not only because it may lead us to an awareness of newly comparable social phenomena, but also because its revelation of such phenomena will demand new theories about *why* these shared or different forms of the social relation came into being and intersected in the ways that they did at given historical moments, and why, at other historical moments, they changed. At its furthest end, hemispheric comparison calls for something more than the description, however complex, of the conflicting or shared desires of multiple local peoples across a wider space. It will also demand that we interrogate our own desire to theorize causality in a way that opens up and restores alternative routes through the past to the consciousness of the present, so that new forms of the social relation, a "new" world indeed, can be imagined for the future.

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2
First Peoples: An Introduction to Early Native American Studies

Joanna Brooks

When the French missionary Chretien Le Clercq traveled among the indigenous peoples of eastern Canada in the late seventeenth century, he wondered at the diversity and intricacy of the cultures he encountered. "The origin of these peoples, and the way in which the New World came to be inhabited by an almost infinite multitude of different Peoples and Nations," he observed, "seems so obscure to us that after the most curious and exact investigation to date, we are all forced to confess that it is impossible to have correct and true knowledge on this matter." Thousands of tribal societies with unique languages or dialects, governments, cosmologies, histories, and traditions lived at home in the Americas when European explorers arrived in the fifteenth century. Even after sustaining severe population losses due to European expansion, enslavement, and imported diseases such as smallpox and measles, these Native American peoples continued to maintain their distinctive identities and intellectual and spiritual traditions, traditions which did not readily accede to or admit the presumed intellectual might of European colonizers. To his credit, Le Clercq admitted the impossibility of his compiling an authoritative ethnographic history of indigenous peoples from their origins: "It seems that this secret should be reserved only to the Savages, and that only from them could one learn the whole truth" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 195). Notwithstanding his use of what we would now consider the objectionable term "Savages," Le Clercq here articulates a basic principle of the modern scholarly discipline of Native American studies: that the history and culture of the Americas cannot be properly understood without reference to the experiential and knowledge bases of its indigenous peoples, and that Native peoples themselves are best positioned to articulate and interpret their own intellectual traditions.

This essay will explore Native American studies as a theoretical and pedagogical framework for the study of colonial American literatures. The colonial past is a site of ongoing contestation for millions of indigenous peoples living in the Americas today, who through oral traditions, tribal histories, scholarship, and other intellectual and

political endeavors continue to maintain their own perspectives on European colonization and Native survival. "Doing" Native American studies in the colonial era means engaging Native perspectives on colonization as a critical lens for the interpretation of early American histories, literatures, and cultures. It means adopting an interpretive framework informed by a deep respect for distinctive and powerful traditions of Native thought and culture, as well as an awareness of the ongoing legacies of colonization and colonialism for contemporary Native peoples. This essay reviews the history of American Indian studies as a discipline, its shaping methodologies and concerns, and its implications for scholarship in history and literature. I will also survey new theoretical directions in colonial-era Native American studies, including critiques of colonization and the construction of race and gender in the Americas. The essay then focuses on the literary history of Native peoples in the colonial eras. It begins with an appreciation of indigenous textual forms not yet acknowledged or included in anthologies such as *The Literatures of Colonial America*, and then reviews anthologized texts such as oral narratives, historical documents, and writings by Native authors. My goal is to map out the serious methodological challenges which characterize study and instruction of early Native American literature, as well as to advance scholarly consideration for this rich and incomparable body of American literature and the dimensions of indigenous experience it represents.

American Indian studies emerged as a distinct field in the 1960s and 1970s, when a generation of Native American scholars and students empowered by increasing access to higher education and the Civil Rights and Red Power movements began to establish academic programs based in the historical experiences and political priorities of Native peoples. In prioritizing the views and needs of Native communities, American Indian studies broke with anthropological methodologies of salvage ethnography which had long dominated the study of indigenous peoples. Salvage ethnography objectified Native cultures as endangered artifacts needing scientific documentation and preservation; on this premise, it tended to disregard the authority of Native peoples as living experts and custodians of their own vital cultures and it sanctioned the removal of Native cultural properties including human remains, grave goods, and other sacred items from their tribal communities for ostensible "safekeeping" in museums and universities. This salvage ethnographic approach extended beyond the fields of archeology and anthropology to shape scholarship in American Indian art, folklore, literature, religion, and history as well.

Traditionally, historians of the colonial and early national eras adopted a colonialist perspective, treating Native Americans either as savage peoples vanquished by superior European powers or as the hapless victims of European expansion. The emergence of the "New Indian History" and the growth of ethnohistory in the 1970s signaled new efforts to understand colonization not as simple conquest but rather as a complex set of encounters which required of both Native peoples and European colonists strategic negotiations, adaptations, and accommodations. This more nuanced view of the interactions between European American and Native American societies provides a welcome corrective to the often explicit colonialist biases of early American

studies by advancing our understanding of the ways Native Americans have survived rather than succumbed to colonization. But while ethnohistorians like James Axtell have changed how we see American Indians in the colonial and early national eras, they have also been criticized for not substantially changing the way their historical methods regard Indian sources. American Indian scholars point out that most historians still rely overwhelmingly on Euro-American colonial records and neglect Native perspectives or tribal histories. Angela Cavender Wilson (Wahpatonwan Dakota) writes: "Very few have attempted to find out how Native people would interpret, analyze, or question the documents they confront, nor have they asked if the Native people they are studying have their own versions or stories of the past" (Mihesuah 1998: 23).

A Native American studies approach to the history and literatures of the colonial eras is distinguished by its commitment to recovering Native views of colonization by consulting living tribal traditions and peoples, as well as recovering Native texts embedded in colonial archives. Increasingly, Native academics and activists are also pushing the field of Native American studies not only to develop its own Indian-centered methodologies but also to tailor its scholarly agendas to support indigenist critiques of colonialism and efforts towards self-determination and decolonization. How scholars of Native American experience in the colonial and early national eras can contribute to these political projects remains an open question.

One way we can potentially contribute to indigenist critiques of colonialism is by conducting more self-reflexive and critical readings of the literature of colonization. Our knowledge of this literature can provide important historical context for current theoretical and methodological debates concerning the study of American Indian cultures as well as for the centuries-old political struggle between colonial dominance and Native resistance. It is important to recognize that the most conservative tendencies in contemporary scholarship descend from scholastic habits established in sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth-century European American writings about Native peoples, writings which we know were used to legitimate colonization. Understanding the ways colonialist agendas shaped scholastic enterprises centuries ago helps us recognize how those same agendas play out in current debates in Native American studies today. Take, for example, the question of how to account for Native North American population origins. This question is a prime site of contention between scholarly convention and Native traditions. The most widely accepted natural-scientific and anthropological theory now holds that American Indians migrated from Asia to America tens of thousands of years ago across a Bering Strait land bridge; this, in fact, is the view presented in the *Literatures of Colonial America* anthology. However, Native Americans have very different accounts of their own origins as the aboriginal peoples who have inhabited the Americas from time immemorial. The divergence in how scholars view Native peoples and how Native peoples view themselves has real implications for the politics of American Indian sovereignty. Eminent Hunkpapa Sioux scholar-activist Vine Deloria, Jr. charges that those who espouse the Ice Bridge theory – which, he contends, remains scientifically

unproven – would render Indians "immigrants to North America" and thus "deny the fact that we were the full, complete, and total owners of this continent. They are able to see us simply as earlier interlopers and therefore throw back at us the accusation that we had simply *found* North America a little earlier than they had" (Deloria 1997: 69–70). Nonetheless, most scholars today dismiss the truth-value and political implications of tribal origin stories. We find the same attitude expressed by colonial writers hundreds of years ago. For example, Father Louis Hennepin in his *Description of Louisiana* (1683), a record of his travels in the upper Mississippi Valley and among the Sioux, portrays the oral histories of Native peoples as deeply unreliable:

> If in Europe, we were like them deprived of writing . . . we would not be less ignorant than they. It is true that they recount some things about their origin; but when you ask whether what they say about it is true, they answer that they know nothing about it, that they would not assure us of it, and that they believe them to be stories of their old men, to which they do not give much credit. (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 189)

Given the foundational importance of origin stories to tribal cultures and identities, it is probable that Hennepin's Indian informants were engaged in strategic dissimulation when they told him that they did not trust the traditional accounts of the origins of their peoples. Perhaps they were motivated by a healthy sense of irony to poke fun at their French inquisitor, or by a sense of duty to pretend ignorance and protect sacred knowledge. Hennepin's comments, however, document the continuity of Euro-American scholarly tendencies to discount or dismiss tribal knowledge. They demonstrate that Europeans and Euro-Americans have underestimated the value or significance of "stories" in indigenous cultures. Finally, Hennepin's remarks show that dismissing Native testimonies and traditions has always been a component of colonialism.

In addition to advancing critiques of colonialist epistemologies, early Native American studies can also advance our understanding of how imperialism has impacted the way race and gender have been lived in the Americas. Assessing the specific impacts of colonization on gender relations has been an important focus for scholarship. Native American women both shared in the general impacts of colonization on tribal communities and suffered its gender-specific effects. Many tribes were traditionally matrilineal or egalitarian societies, which accorded women specific positions of ritual, economic, and political power. The Great Binding Law of the Iroquois Confederacy, for example, vested matrilineal clan mothers with the authority to choose, appoint, remove, and admonish male leaders; among the Choctaw and other southeastern tribes, women rather than men customarily held the rights to occupy and use land. European colonists, however, imposed on the Americas systems of thought and law which placed men in positions of economic, political, cultural, and religious priority over women. Native American women consequently experienced an erosion of status as their tribal communities sought to survive and maintain their land bases by accommodating patriarchal European norms of governance and

ownership (Shoemaker 1995; Perdue 1995, 2001; Mihesuah 2003). Colonial-era writings further diminish or obscure the traditional power of American Indian women by shaping representations of Native women according to Eurocentric assumptions about gender. As historian Devon Mihesuah (Choctaw) relates:

> Most observations of Indian women in traditional societies were written by Euro-American men, who judged them by the same standards that they judged women of their own societies. Many non-Natives misunderstood tribal kinship systems, gender roles, and tribal spiritual and social values. Their observations also reflected their biases and, perhaps, their desire to manipulate reality to accommodate their expectation that Native women were held in lesser regard in their tribal societies because women were subservient to men in European societies. (Mihesuah 2003: 45)

Native oral traditions can offer a different perspective on gender values in Native communities, especially those stories which feature female deities such as Spider Woman of the Puebloan Southwest, Changing Woman of the Navajo, White Buffalo Calf Woman of the Sioux, or Corn Mother Selu of the Cherokee. It is also useful to scrutinize historical accounts of indigenous women such as Dona Marina in Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *History of the Conquest of New Spain* or Pocahontas in John Smith's *Generall Historie of Virginia* with an eye to the colonial politics of gender. Contemporary Native writers suggest that these famous figures were driven to ally themselves with powerful European colonists not out of overwhelming passion but rather to fulfill their own traditional values, diplomatic responsibilities, and political ambitions (Allen 2003). Moreover, they point out that European colonists were blinded by their own gender biases to Native women's roles as diplomats and political leaders. Reading the literatures of colonial America from a Native American studies perspective entails both critical interrogation of colonialist assumptions about gender, as well as a careful, informed, and imaginative reconstruction of indigenous women's lives in the colonial and early national eras.

A critical reading of colonial literatures also reveals how categories of racial identification were historically constructed as instruments of imperialism. Placing these colonial writings alongside traditional and contemporary Native American texts addressing issues of community and identity can provide alternate viewpoints on the value of race in the Americas. Recent work in early Native American studies teaches us that the notion of American Indians as a distinct biological race was largely the product of eighteenth-century empiricist science aligned with imperial and nationalist political agendas. Although many Native communities eventually answered to Euro-American notions of racial purity in order to maintain their political sovereignty, Native American studies scholarship documents more complex notions of identification and affiliation among the tribes of the colonial and early national Americas: Christian Indian converts, white captives who refuse to leave their newfound Indian families, backcountry Scotch-Irish who married among the Cherokee and Creek, and mixed-race Black Indians from Massachusetts to Georgia. These

stories as remembered in the literature of early America challenge us to abandon fixed notions of identity and to develop new understandings of how Native peoples have defined and redefined themselves and their communities against terminal and static notions of racial purity (Brooks 2002; Perdue 2003). By fostering critiques of conventional notions of race and gender, Native American studies of the colonial era thus can potentially reframe the way we view centuries-old struggles over power, identity, community, and belonging in the Americas.

It is only within the last fifteen years that Native American texts have found a place within literature anthologies representing the colonial Americas. *The Harper Anthology of American Literature* (1987) and the *Heath Anthology of American Literature* (1990) were the first to include selections of indigenous oral and print literatures, including creation narratives, chants, poems, and documents such as Powhatan's "Letter to John Smith." These materials, the editors explained, were incorporated in an effort to acknowledge the political and cultural primacy of the Native peoples of the Americas, to convey a sense of the longevity and richness of Native literary traditions, and to provide a fuller range of perspectives on the events and effects of colonization. Subsequent editions and anthologies reflect an ongoing debate among Native American literature scholars over how to best achieve these editorial aims through principles of text selection, presentation, and annotation. *The Literatures of Colonial America* anthology further advances this discussion by including indigenous texts from Mexico and Central and South America to demonstrate that the experiences of Native peoples in the era of colonization may best be understood through a comparative colonial perspective. Whereas the indigenous literary presence in the colonial era was once represented as silent, scholars now find a dazzling array of oral narratives, historical documents, and Native-authored texts and with them new methodological and pedagogical challenges.

The incorporation of Native American materials within early American literature anthologies is an important corrective to hundreds of years of ignorance or antipathy towards the indigenous literatures of the Americas. European and Euro-American colonists generally assumed that the indigenous peoples of North America were wholly illiterate, thus bereft of civilization and incapable of governing their own lands or themselves. The more generous among the colonists argued that Native illiteracy was not irredeemable, and that Native peoples could be civilized and elevated through education. Thomas Jefferson wrote in his *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787): "Before we condemn the Indians of this continent as wanting genius, we must consider that letters have not yet been introduced among them" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 531). But Jefferson and all others who assumed the illiteracy of Native North America were wrong. Indigenous peoples of the early Americas cultivated intricate literate traditions in forms ranging from oral narratives, songs, and ceremonies to inscribed Mayan and Mixtec codices, from Ojibwe birchbark scrolls to woven Iroquoian wampum belts, and from painted Siouian winter counts to the rock pictographs and pottery of the Puebloan Southwest. Archeologists have recently discovered evidence that the Olmec peoples of southern Mexico developed a system

of symbolic writing as early as 650 BC and that these Olmec symbols influenced later writing systems among the Mayans. Mayan and Mixtec peoples of preconquest Mexico and Central America also produced screenfold books now known as codices, which scribes called *tlacuilos*, imprinted with pictographs, ideographs, and phonetic symbols, as well as graphic indicators such as scale and position and chromatic indicators such as color to direct readers of the screenfolds. Spanish priests and conquistadors ordered the burning of Mixtec and Mayan libraries during the first two decades of the Spanish conquest of Mexico, between 1520 and 1540, destroying the archives of these indigenous literature cultures. Contemporary Native author Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna Pueblo) asserts this destruction of Native writing was purposeful:

> They burned the great libraries because they wished to foster the notion that the New World was populated by savages. Savages could be slaughtered and enslaved; savages were no better than wild beasts and thus had no property rights. International law regulated the fate of conquered nations but not of savages or beasts . . . The great libraries of the Americas were destroyed in 1540 because the Spaniards feared the political and spiritual power of books authored by the indigenous peoples. (Silko 1996: 157, 165)

Seventeen codices representing Mixtec and Mayan ceremonial and historical traditions survive in libraries in London, Madrid, Paris, Dresden, Vienna, Bologna, Rome, and Mexico City. The fact that most of these books belong to European libraries demonstrates that the literary legacy of precolonial Native America remains a site of ongoing contestation.

We now rely heavily on transcripts of Native oral narratives, songs, and ceremonies to represent American Indian literate culture in the precolonial and colonial eras. Studying and teaching these texts presents a unique set of theoretical concerns and pedagogical challenges. One point of concern is that the teaching of Native oral traditions not convey or confirm inherited impressions of Native peoples and cultures as being out of time. Several factors contribute to this problem. First, there is the chronological organization of our literary anthologies and survey courses: when Native oral texts appear only at the top of the table of contents or only on the first week of the syllabus, this can communicate the incorrect impression that these texts are remnants of expired cultures and extinct peoples. Secondly, there is the fact that we rely upon transcripts by nineteenth and twentieth-century salvage ethnographers to stand in for a pre-Columbian moment. Thirdly, there is the mythopoetic timelessness of the stories themselves – in the words of Acoma poet Simon Ortiz, the sense of "long ago and far ago" – and their marked differences in form and content from the European documents of colonization which immediately follow them. All of these factors tend to confirm popular notions of indigenous American peoples as being asynchronous with contemporary society, as being people of the past, or, even worse, as extinct. It is, then, important to recognize the conscripted historical situation of

the Native oral texts in our anthologies and our syllabi, to understand that these texts imperfectly represent oral traditions which have been constantly changing and growing for hundreds if not thousands of years, and to remember that these texts belong to living American Indian communities who maintain distinct identities, cultures, and land bases as Native sovereign nations.

Another point of concern is that simply transposing Native oral texts into a colonial literature curriculum can obscure or negate important differences between European American and Native American intellectual traditions. Native intellectual traditions are built around core conceptions of time, space, power, subjectivity, community, relationality, land, and property which can diverge radically from European, Judeo-Christian philosophical and religious traditions, and this distinctiveness constitutes one of the grounds for American Indian political sovereignty. Important to our purposes as readers of literature is the recognition that Native intellectual traditions hold distinctive views of language as an instrument of power. The function of many Native texts is to enact rather than merely represent events in the world. Correspondingly, Native oral texts occupy specific nodes of ritual and social power within their communities of origin. They may correlate with specific ceremonial practices, geographical places, or temporal seasons; specific stories may belong to specific tellers or clans, or different tellers or clans may preserve differing versions of the same story. Native oral traditions also tend to employ modes of signification and storytelling which reflect their distinctive cosmological traditions and thus differ dramatically from Euro-American symbolic and narrative conventions. For example, in some tribal cultures, traditional oral narratives are organized around geographical places or cardinal directions rather than along the linear chronological and developmental axis most familiar to readers educated in European and Euro-American literary traditions. Moreover, many elements of signification do not readily translate from oral to print forms, including the place, time, and ceremonial or social context of the telling; the identity of the storyteller and his or her relationship to the audience; audience interlocution or response; and gesture, pitch, tempo, rhythm, or facial expression (Swann 1983).

Many of these important elements and consequently profound distinctions between Native and Euro-American intellectual and literary traditions they represent have been lost, obscured, or complicated in the multiple processes of translation which bring oral texts into scholarly editions, anthologies, and classrooms. With each ethnographic telling and recording, oral texts are actively reshaped to satisfy the storytellers' sense of the practical or political exigencies of the situation or to reflect the ethnographers' preconceptions of Indian peoples. The choices of individual storytellers, ethnographers, and translators thus have compound consequences for the way we now read and understand Native oral traditions. It is important that we recognize and mindfully address these metacritical and metatextual challenges associated with translating oral traditions into textual mediums and from tribal oral contexts into textbooks and college classrooms. Reckoning with these challenges can give us a better sense of the ways European colonization impacted not only material

and political realities in the Americas but also the ways peoples of different cultures understood themselves and each other. Recognizing that Native oral traditions have distinctive characteristics which do not translate to print contexts, or that they represent traditional, tribal knowledges not immediately or perhaps fully accessible to contemporary Euro-American readers, does not mean that we should not read and study this rich body of American literature. Rather, it teaches us that Native intellectual traditions have a distinctive power and shape, and it reminds us that – as is the case in any field of serious study – diligence, dedication, and rigor are required for understanding them. Reading Native oral traditions may ultimately tell us less about the precolonial past than it does about the challenges of cultivating historical understanding in the context of colonialism.

Scholars have developed a range of methods to address the manifold scholarly and pedagogical challenges of Native oral literatures. One way is to focus on a single tribal tradition, to commit to learning as much as possible about the history, culture, and literary traditions of the tribe, and then using this information to approach a single oral text. This practice helps us appreciate the depth and complexity of Native American intellectual, spiritual, and literary traditions, as well as the scholarly labor required to appreciate them. Another approach focuses on the discipline necessary to maintaining oral traditions. Some teachers assign students to memorize and deliver their own renditions of Native oral texts, then examine how these renditions may have retained or rearranged important elements or conventions of the narrative. It can also be instructive to compile and compare versions of Native oral texts transcribed at different historical moments by different anthropologists or Native writers using different modes of transcription. How a text appears on the printed page strongly determines how we understand the individual text and the oral tradition to which it belongs. Many of the transcripts now appearing in American literature anthologies were produced in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when it was common practice to typographically transpose oral texts into standard prose narrative forms. Beginning in the 1970s, anthropologists such as Dell Hymes and Dennis Tedlock argued that prose narrative transcriptions of oral texts obscured the deeper poetic structures of these texts and failed to represent performed elements of signification such as breaks, pauses, patterns of repetition, conventional openings and closings, and changes in performance tone or speed. Hymes and Tedlock developed a practice of ethnopoetics which typographically presents oral texts as poetry, with stanza and line breaks and other typographical markers strategically placed to highlight significant literary structures or indicate elements of performance (Tedlock 1972; Hymes 1981). Teaching ethnopoetic transcriptions of oral texts communicates the crucial relationship between text, context, and performance essential to Native oral tradition.

Yet another way to approach Native oral literature is through the work of contemporary Native American literary artists who maintain and honor their respective tribal traditions by incorporating them into written forms such as poetry and prose narrative. Teaching a Bureau of American Ethnology transcript of the Navajo origin

or emergence story, for example, alongside the poem "This is How They Were Placed for Us" by Navajo poet Luci Tapahonso, helps to convey the fact that traditional mythopoetic landscapes are real places – geographical and spiritual homelands – inhabited by vibrant contemporary Native communities.

Common to these pedagogical approaches is the recognition that an important function of Native oral texts in the colonial literature classroom is not only to convey information about Native peoples and cultures but also to cultivate deeper habits of literary-critical reflection in our students. As Greg Sarris (Pomo/Miwok) relates:

> I begin my American Indian literature course by telling a story told to me by my Kashaya Pomo elders. I then ask students, usually at the next class meeting, to repeat the story as they heard it. Invariably their stories tell them more about themselves than about the story or about the speaker and culture from which the story comes. Here students can see how they are approaching the story and begin to explore unexamined assumptions by which they operate and which they use to frame the texts and experiences of members of another culture. This storytelling (about a story) engenders a reflexivity that pervades or establishes the groundwork for further study of American Indian texts. (Sarris 1993: 149)

Cultivating reflexivity advances pedagogical goals consonant with the aims of early Native American studies. In learning to honor the distinctive literary and intellectual cultures of Native North America, even as we recognize that a fuller comprehension of these traditions must come through long study and, even more importantly, affiliation with Native communities, we can help decenter the Eurocentric bias which has long structured the study of colonial American literature. We know that transcripts of a few oral narratives can only suggest the fullness of Native oral traditions, and we understand that the transcripts we do have are imperfect in many ways: that processes of translation, transcription, and publication inevitably fail to capture the complex richness of oral textuality or to honor the integrity of oral traditions. These frustrations usefully derail the colonialist ethnographic impulses which would find fulfillment simply in encountering novel and unfamiliar literary cultures. Beyond instituting a more multicultural imagination of the moments of colonial encounter, reading indigenous oral traditions leads us inevitably to confront the limits of our own readerly training in Eurocentric and oftentimes colonialist aesthetic values and interpretive practices.

Native oral texts are not the only documents which can convey the indigenous presence in the colonial and early national eras. Indeed, the European-authored literature of exploration offers extensive documentation of Native reactions and resistance to European expansion. Read against the grain of their imperialist biases, they provide especially instructive insights into the complex range of ideologies and beliefs which legitimated and sustained European colonization. They reveal colonialism in its diverse epistemic and cultural underpinnings, from the imperial confidence of Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *History of the Conquest of New Spain* (1568; Castillo and

Schweitzer 2001: 40–62) to the "Black Legend" of Spanish cruelty conveyed in Bartolomé de Las Casas' *History of the Indies* (1566; Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 27–32); from the redeemer-complex autohagiography of Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's *Relación* (1542; Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 36–9) to the wickedly satirical secular hedonism of Thomas Morton's mock epic-ethnographic *New English Canaan* (1637; Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 236–43); and from the mercantilistic optimism of Thomas Harriot's *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1587; Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 92–9) to the bureaucratic impotence revealed in Don Otermin's *Letter on the Pueblo Revolt* (1680; Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 170–7). All of these texts enrich our understanding of the diversity of the political, cultural, and epistemological regimes which have determined the treatment of Native peoples in the Americas since 1492. The European-authored literature of exploration and colonization can also provide a rich repository of ethnographic information about Native American customs, cultures, religions, politics, and languages. Texts designed to assist in the conversion of the Indians, like Roger Williams' lexicographic *A Key Into the Language of America* (1643; Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 267–76), have preserved important elements of endangered indigenous languages like Narragansetts. Even missionary-scribes like Diego de Landa, who asserted in his sixteenth-century *Account of Things in Yucatan* (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 71–3) "the Indians have not lost, but rather have gained with the coming of the Spaniards," document and acknowledge indigenous cultural achievements such as the Mayan calendar. Such writings by Europeans offer an important source of information and insight into Native worldviews and cultures in the era of colonization.

Colonial legal records and religious writings also serve as a rich repository for another important body of early Native American literature: speeches, petitions, contracts, and other legal documents. It is important to expand our notions of literature and authorship beyond their narrowest definitions to embrace this body of colonial texts, which preserve words delivered by indigenous orators during treaty councils and other governmental proceedings as well as collective expressions of the political will of tribal communities. *The Literatures of Colonial America* culls from colonial archives speeches by a number of powerful seventeenth-century tribal leaders, including Powhatan, Mittark (Gay Head/Massachusett), and Garangula (Onondaga). It also includes documents like the Narragansett *Act of Submission* (1644), which reflect Native communities' efforts to master English literate and legal forms in order to protect themselves against further colonial encroachment. Native speeches and experiences are also embedded in religious writings and records. Father Chretien Le Clercq's *New Relation of Gaspesia* (1691; Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 194–6) records the astutely critical speech of one Mi'kmaq tribal leader who viewed French colonization as a sign of the weakness of European civilization:

> You find yourselves among us . . . to redeem the poverty and misery which overwhelm you, while we find all our wealth and all our comforts in our own land . . . There is not a

> Savage who does not feel himself to be infinitely happier and more powerful than the French. (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 196)

Equally compelling are the visions, omens, and portents of colonization received by Aztecs years before the arrival of the Spanish; these were documented by the Franciscan priest Bernadino de Sahagún and incorporated into Diego Munoz Camargo's *Historia de Tlaxcala* (1520; Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 62–5). *The Miraculous Apparition of the Beloved Virgin Mary* (1649) reported by the Indian Juan Diego and recorded by the Spanish bishop Juan de Zumarraga is a vision which integrates elements of Christian belief within existing Native Mexican traditions: the manifestation of a brown-skinned, Nahuatl-speaking, Indian-identified Virgin Mary at Tepeyacac, the traditional shrine of the Aztec fertility goddess Tonantzin. These embedded and mediated indigenous texts cannot be said to have been written by Native authors themselves. This matters less than the fact that such writings preserve and convey valuable Native perspectives on colonial events. They also document the ways indigenous peoples have anticipated and interpreted the upheavals of colonization through the frameworks of their own distinctive spiritual and historical traditions and through the selective adaptation and indigenization of Christian traditions in the Americas.

Texts written by indigenous authors comprise the smallest body of Native American literature surviving from the colonial and early national eras. *The Literatures of Colonial America* includes three such accounts, all of which reflect the intricate political situation of literate Native people writing at the contested intersections of Indian and European cultural domains. *La Florida del Inca* (1605), a history of the De Soto expedition to Florida, was written by El Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, son of an Incan mother and Spaniard father. Garcilaso el Inca's account reflects his awareness of his "obligation to two races" in representing not only "the honor and renown of the Spanish nation" but also the Native peoples who "appear worthy of the same praise" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 115). Another Incan historian named Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala descended from an indigenous family traditionally allied with the Spanish. In 1613 he compiled a monumental, illustrated Quechua and Spanish-language manuscript history of conquest entitled *Letter to a King*, which plainly asserts the cruelty and moral failings of the Spanish in their treatment of Native Peruvians. Like Ayala, the eighteenth-century North American Indian writer Samson Occom (Mohegan) enjoyed a privileged access to literacy, which he obtained when he was trained as a missionary by Dartmouth College founder Eleazar Wheelock. Over the course of five decades, Occom traveled and preached extensively in both white and Indian communities, representing Indian causes and concerns to non-Indian audiences and laboring among Indian communities to enact tribal revitalization through Christian conversion. His "Short Narrative of My Life" (1768) articulates the constraints he confronted moving between white and Indian worlds during a time of heightened racial awareness and anxiety in British North America, especially in the form of discriminatory pay and treatment from his own sponsoring religious society.

"I believe it is because I am a poor Indian," Occom claims. "I Can't help that God has made me So; I did not make my self so" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 484). These three texts by exceptional Native authors are challenging because they refuse to yield an easy understanding of what it meant to be Indian in the era of colonization. Rather, they convey the marginal, interstitial, or contested positions of literate indigenous individuals who assumed responsibility for representing and leading their tribal communities during a time of tremendous change.

The oral traditions, historical documents, and indigenous-authored texts which constitute early Native American literature reflect both in content and form the impacts of colonialism as well as the rich resilience of indigenous cultures. Studying and teaching this body of literature from a Native American studies perspective requires that we acknowledge the challenging legacies of colonialism for our own work. Two challenges in particular face those who read, teach, and study Native literatures and cultures in the colonial era. First, there is the challenge of breaking down longstanding barriers which have excluded tribal-traditional knowledges from university-based scholarship, and second, the challenge of developing research and interpretive methods which can account for and in some way answer the biases and limitations of the colonial archives. Addressing ourselves to these problems with mindfulness and critical reflexivity is essential to adopting a Native American studies approach to the colonial era, while developing an appreciation for the deep intelligence, sovereignty, and majesty of indigenous intellectual traditions during and beyond the era of colonization is one of its hallmark rewards.

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3
Toward a Cultural Geography of Colonial American Literatures: Empire, Location, Creolization

Ralph Bauer

From the Colonial "Period" to Colonial "Regions"

As the editors of the Blackwell anthology *The Literatures of Colonial America* (2001), Susan Castillo and Ivy Schweitzer, observe, American studies has undergone a "paradigm shift" in recent years from which the study of early American literature has not remained immune. To be sure, as Castillo and Schweitzer point out, this paradigm shift has in part been due to the influence of the multiculturalist movement on colonial American literary studies, which has effected an unprecedented expansion of the canon to include not only African American, Native American, and women writers, but also new geocultural areas, such as Florida, California, and New Mexico. The multiculturalist paradigm of early American literature found one of its culminations with the various incarnations of the *Heath Anthology of American Literature*. As the general editor of that anthology, Paul Lauter, sensibly remarked, many of the "works from the half-continent that was then Spanish America and later texts concerned with similar issues of religion and politics" had previously been "dismissed as outside the bounds of literary study (Lauter 1998: xxxiii). The *Heath* therefore also included texts by writers such as Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Pedro de Castañeda, and Gaspar de Villagrá, along with the traditional representatives of the early US American canon, such as John Smith, William Bradford, or Benjamin Franklin, thus presenting a more diverse mosaic of early American literature than any literary anthology before.

However, its cultural inclusiveness notwithstanding, in its exclusive geographic focus on those colonial territories that would later become the United States, the multiculturalists' metanarrative of early American literary history has been caught in a critical anachronism. As one outspoken critic of the proto-nationalist paradigm in early American literary studies has pointed out "No one wrote in what has been called

'the future United States,' a future that did not exist until it was a past" (Spengemann 1994: 49). Indeed, by including Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's *Relación* but not Las Casas' *Historia de las Indias*, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés' letter from La Florida but not Cortés' *Cartas* from Mexico, or Villagrá's epic *Historia de Nueva Mexico* (about New Mexico) but not Ercilla's epic *La Araucana* (about Chile) based on the rationale that each of the former dealt with a territory that would later form a part of the United States while each of the latter did not, such a paradigm forecloses on an understanding of these texts within their proper intellectual, historical, literary contexts. Colonial American texts themselves are of interest in this paradigm primarily as a source or "first" in a literary tradition that came later. Thus, Cabeza de Vaca's narrative, for example, is seen as a "first in the US tradition . . . [a] mestizo voice speaking for the first time from what is now the US literary tradition. His text both narrates and incarnates the process of becoming something new we now call American" (Bruce-Novoa 1998; cf. Bruce-Novoa 1990). More disturbingly perhaps, anthologies engaged in such a US proto-nationalist paradigm have tended to eclipse colonial Spanish American literatures during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as the literatures of the nineteenth-century American nation-states, thereby running the risk of reinforcing US American ideas of exceptionalism and manifest destiny, according to which the history of entire colonial North America culminates in the foundation of the United States. The literary history of the Ibero-American colonies and nation-states, by contrast, vanishes into thin air after the initial European discoveries and conquests have been completed – as though touched by Hegel's nineteenth-century "spirit" of history. In this time-honored narrative of successive periods of American history, Native Americans "inhabited" America, Italian explorers (such as Columbus, Vespucci, Verrazano, or Cabot) "discovered" America, Spaniards (such as Cortés or Díaz del Castillo) "conquered" America, Englishmen (such as Smith or Bradford) "settled" America, and (US) Americans (such as Franklin or Barlow) "founded" *the* America nation-state.

To be sure, the anachronisms pointed out above in the multiculturalist metanarrative of early American literature would apply to *any* literary history of the colonial Americas written within a particular national context, as the history of European colonialism in the New World, while intimately related to the history of modern nationalism, was essentially still transnational (or more accurately pre-national) in nature. Cortés' letters from Mexico, for example, were translated into (and published in) virtually all Western European languages and inspired not only subsequent Spanish conquerors, such as the Pizarros in Peru or Pánfilo de Narváez in La Florida, but also English explorers such as Sir Walter Ralegh or Thomas Harriot. By the same token, Italian, English, or Dutch travel collections, such as Giambattista Ramusio's *Navigazioni et viaggi* (1556), Samuel Purchas' *Hakluytus Posthumus* (1625), or Alexandre Esquemeling's *The Buccaneers of America* (1681), were read not only in Protestant countries but also in Spain and New Spain, official censorship and bans notwithstanding.

From this point of view, the editors of *The Literatures of Colonial America* have proposed a model of "colonial American literature" that goes importantly beyond the

multiculturalist reconfigurations of the proto-nationalist metanarrative. Their stated aim is to bring together "texts from diverse linguistic and cultural traditions which could be used for *transnational* analysis." While some parts of the anthology are still "organized chronologically," others juxtapose texts "according to *region*" (Castillo/Schweitzer 2001: xvi–xvii; my emphasis) – the various colonies comprising British America, Spanish America, and French America. The editors hereby invite the reader to investigate what "colonial" and "American" meant in each "regional" context throughout the hemisphere and, ultimately, to theorize "colonial literature" in the Americas comparatively. Significantly, "colonial," in this sense, suggests not so much a category of time (that which came before the "national" period) but rather a category of space (a set of particular locations within the larger context of transatlantic empires). In other words, "colonial" is used here not as a category of history – the study of cultural change across time – but rather of geography – the study of cultural diversification across space.

But how can a cultural region or literary tradition in the Americas be "colonial" from the point of view of geography? This essay is intended to explore the implications that the conceptual vocabulary and methodologies of the discipline of cultural geography might hold for literary history in general and for the comparative study of colonial American literatures in particular. The following section reviews some of the basic concepts and developments in cultural geography; the succeeding section takes the case of vice-regal New Spain as a historical example of how a "colonial region" might be understood in terms of cultural geography; and the final section provides a discussion of two prose narratives from New Spain – Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *Historia verdadera* and Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora's *Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez* – in light of the concepts of cultural geography.

The Geography of Cultural Diversity in the Colonial Americas

A heterogeneous discipline that has often been "deeply intertwined with empire building" (Crang 1998: 59), cultural geography can be loosely described as comprising three major established lines of inquiry: the investigation of the interactions between the natural environment and human culture; the diversification of human culture across space as a result of demographic migration, cultural diffusion, and intercultural exchange; and the cognitive or symbolic ordering of space through human culture and ideologies (see Wagner 1994; Hugill and Foote 1994). The first line of inquiry harks back to at least the sixteenth century, with the Spanish natural histories of the New World such as José de Acosta's *Historia natural y moral* (1590), and perhaps even to the Roman tradition of Strabo (ca. 63 BC–AD 24). In modern times, the origins of cultural geography are often associated with the rise of the so-called "Berkeley school" that formed during the first half of the twentieth century around the work of geographer Carl Sauer (1889–1975). Sauer and his followers critiqued determinist theories in classical cultural geography, whose Eurocentric bias

still prevailed during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as geographers such as Ellen Semple posited simple causal connections between the physical and climatic environment on the one hand and the development of human culture on the other (see Sauer 1962: 317) For example, these earlier theories had held that the temperate regions in the Northern hemisphere had "naturally" achieved greatest cultural and economic development because the climate forced people there to work in order to eke out an existence, whereas in the tropics, where people had no need to work, the environment caused people to be lazy. Sauer and his followers, by contrast, challenged not only the imperialist ideology underlying such theories but also the basic factual accuracy of such monolithic explanations, calling attention to the substantial diversity and complexity of cultures in any given climactic and environmental region. He hereby aligned himself with the empirical tradition of "chorography" (the empirical description by travelers) that has been an integral aspect of geography from Strabo to Alexander von Humbolt, rather than with the geographical tradition proper of Ptolemy (the mathematical and rationalist mapping of the world). He defined cultural geography as "the art of seeing how land and life have come to differ from one part of the earth to another." He therefore proposed the "cultural region" as the basic spatial unit of close analysis, "an area made up of a distinct association of forms, both physical and cultural" (ibid: 105, 321).

Sauer's special field of expertise was in pre-and post-conquest New Spain, which he divided into two basic cultural landscapes: the central/southern and the northern cultural region. The colonial culture that formed in post-conquest New Spain, he argued, cannot be understood in isolation from the cultural patterns in the Central Valley before the European conquest. The highly developed cultures the Spaniards encountered in the Central Valley, marked by intensive maize production with trade and surplus extraction that sustained a hierarchical urban lifestyle with a highly developed division of labor, enabled the Spanish to set up a colonial system of surplus extraction on the back of the Aztec system already in place. Thus, at the time the Spanish arrived in Mexico, the basic patterns of subsequent cultural development had already been laid (Sauer 1966, 1971). Although Sauer's own particular empirical data derived from his study of pre-and post-conquest New Spain, his approach had important implications for the study of the colonial Americas at large. Building on Sauer's approach, subsequent cultural geographers such as Donald Meinig and Wilbur Zelinksy have investigated other cultural regions in the Americas. Thus, Meinig (1986) investigated the development of French Acadian colonial cultures, while Zelinsky (1973) (and later William Cronon 1983) investigated the eastern seaboard of North America.

But the interactions between the natural environment and human cultures constitute only one field of interest for cultural geographers. Another is the question of how cultures change through interregional cultural contact, exchange, and migration. In classical cultural geography, the contact between various groups of Europeans, Native Americans, and (later) Africans in the Americas has often been described in terms of "cultural diffusion," as technologies of agriculture, warfare, or print, as well as

religions, ideologies, or literary traditions, traveled across space, competing with, replacing, or mixing with local traditions. Before the recent advent of ethnohistory, the diffusionist model was also the dominant paradigm among comparative historians of the early Americas who saw the various colonial cultures developing in the Americas largely in terms of an "expansion" or "fragmentation" of the various European cultures in the New World canvas (see Crosby 1992; Hartz 1946). As they pointed out, the differences between the colonial societies developing in Spanish and British America, for example, must be seen in light of the fact that Catholic Spain's imperial enterprise was, from the very beginning, of an entirely different nature from that of Protestant England, as Spanish conquerors, inspired by the recent reconquest of Spain from the Moors, saw themselves as aristocratic hidalgos who displayed an active interest in the mineral resources of the New World and in its peoples (as new vassals of the crown, as objects of religious conversion, and as tribute labor in their services), while the English were looking primarily for land which could be settled by their own people and considered the Natives hereby mainly as an obstacle (see Seed 1995).

More recently, however, the diffusionist paradigm has come under intense scrutiny and criticism, both in cultural geography and in comparative history. Especially in the context of the decolonization of the so-called "Third World" after World War II, cultural geographers have questioned the assumption that culture "diffuses" from core donor cultures such as Europe (which was often supposed to be somehow "naturally" inventive, progressive, and culturally superior) into the peripheral regions, such as the Americas (which were often presumed to be "naturally" imitative, backwards, and culturally inferior) (see Blaut 1994). Cultural geographers during the late twentieth century therefore aimed to articulate more nuanced models of cultural exchange in the New World "contact zones." They hereby borrowed from cultural anthropologists such as Paul Radin, Sidney Mintz, and Fernando Ortiz, who critiqued both the older "assimilationist" models, which theorized how migrant cultures "adapted" to new environments, as well as the so-called "retentionist" models (proposed most prominently in the early twentieth century by the anthropologist Melville Herskovitz). Instead, they proposed models of "culturation" or "transculturation," as well as "creolization," that theorized the formation of new cultures as a product of cultural contact and exchange (see Radin 1966; Mintz 1992; Ortiz 1987).

Consequently, the formation of the diverse societies in the colonial Americas has come to be understood in terms of various kinds of "culture regions," each of which are subject to particular environmental, demographic, and social factors. Cultural geographers generally distinguish between three different conceptual types of culture regions: formal, functional, and vernacular. Thus, a formal region comprises communities that share a common cultural trait (such as language), a functional region comprises communities that are held together by a political or administrative structure, and a vernacular region, finally, comprises a particular culture commonly *perceived* as sharing a distinct identity, often due to particular environmental, geographic, demographic, or cultural features. For example, a given English settlement in colonial Pennsylvania may share the same "formal" region with an English town in England but not with a German settlement in Pennsylvania; with that German

settlement, it would, however, share a "functional" region (i.e., the administrative, governmental, and legal structure of the colonial government or of the British Empire). By contrast, as a "vernacular" region, this English town in Pennsylvania may be distinct from its counterpart in England, possibly due to its cultural interchanges with the German settlement with which it is in close topographic proximity. Investigating the complex overlay between these various types of cultural "regions," as well as the interplay between variable landscapes and cultures, and the multi-directional processes of intercultural diffusion and creolization, cultural geographers have charted a highly variable series of culturally hybrid "contact zones" that developed in the Americas as a result of European colonization (Crang 1998: 20; see also Jordan-Bychkov and Momosh 1997: 7–14; Wagner and Mikesell 1962).

The increasing self-reflexiveness among cultural geographers about the ideological underpinnings of their time-honored scientific models has given rise also to a new, third school of inquiry into the symbolic and cognitive aspects of the human geographical imagination. Particularly in postmodern cultural geography, scholars have begun to investigate the moral, ethical, and ideological values that cultures attribute to particular landscapes and cultural regions, including the cultural differences that originate with the particular process of cultural diffusion, mixture (*mestizaje*), and creolization. Thus, whereas the first landmark retrospective assessment of the state of the field of cultural geography, Wagner and Mikesell's *Readings in Cultural Geography* (1962), was still primarily concerned with the question of how human culture shaped the natural environment, the second landmark retrospection, Foote et al.'s *Re-Reading Cultural Geography* (1994), paid tribute to this new current by including a section of essays devoted to the question of "what the world means" (pp. 291–398). One particularly prominent force in this "humanistic" and self-reflexive turn within cultural geography has been the rise of postcolonial cultural studies across the disciplines, under the influence of which cultural geographers have begun to investigate the ideologies underlying not only the modern discipline of classical cultural geography specifically, but also human conceptual ordering of space more generally (see Shurmer-Smith 2002; Said 1978; Soja 1989; Lefebvre 1991; Minca 2001; Benko and Strohmayer 1997; also Doel 1999).

Although, in praxis, postmodern cultural geography has more typically been concerned with the study of the symbolic ordering of modern urban spaces, while postcolonial studies have mainly been concerned with British colonialism in India and Africa during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the postcolonial and poststructuralist inquiry into a "triple dialectic of space, time, and social being" and the "relations between history, geography, and modernity" (Soja 1989: 12) holds significant implications also for colonial American studies in general and for understanding the distinct evolution of literary genres in the various cultural regions of the colonial Americas in particular. For, obviously, there is nothing "natural" about the colonial status of a particular region; rather, such a status is the product of particular geographic ideologies and spatialized systems of power, which, in turn, shape regional economies and cultures, as well as physical landscapes. Why is it, for example, that the creature of the "contact zone," the *mestizo* – though a persistent presence in much

of colonial Spanish American literature – is often perceived as an untrustworthy conman, as is, for example, the narrative character of Concolorcorvo in Alonso Carrió de la Vandera's *Lazarillo de ciegos caminantes* or the "gaucho" in Domingo Faustino de Sarmiento's *Facundo*? A cultural geography of colonial American literature would investigate both how colonial American texts make sense of space and how literary formations are structured by space. As Michael Crang (1989: 44) notes, "Geography and literature are both writings about places and spaces. They are both processes of signification, that is, processes of making places meaningful in a social medium." In the remaining sections of this essay, I would like to illustrate this point by taking as an example the literature of Sauer's region of expertise: vice-regal New Spain.

Landscapes of Power in Vice-Regal New Spain

In order to understand the geographically distinct evolution of colonial literary genres in the multiple cultural regions of the colonial Americas, it is necessary to place colonial texts not only in a comparative hemispheric geographical context but also in the transatlantic geographic context of their respective imperial realms. In other words, it is necessary to investigate the environmental, economic, social, and ideological dynamics that produce the "colonial location" of a given text within the cultural geography of empire. As literary historians of colonial Spanish America have recognized, colonial narrative originates with the Spanish chronicles of the Discovery and Conquest, such as Cortés *Cartas de Relación* and López de Gómara's *Historia de la Conquista*. These histories were profoundly informed by the experience and ideology of the Christian reconquest of Spain from the Moors, in which the Christian knights were rewarded for their military services and loyalty with feudal estates in Al-andalus, the former Moorish province that held out until the final fall of Granada in 1492. The conquerors of America during the early sixteenth century, though often of humble background, understood their quests in similar terms and were initially rewarded by the monarch with neo-feudal grants of Native tribute labor, called *encomienda*. The language of the *reconquista* in the Old World served hereby as a metaphor for translating the conquest of the New World in a way that supported the conquerors' social aspirations as a neo-feudal aristocracy. It is in this context that Cortés' descriptions, in his second letter to Charles V, of Tenochtitlan's buildings as "mosques" must be read (Cortés 1986: 85). However, the Habsburg crown, which had been able to expand its absolutist power in Europe in part by using the "royal fifth" it received from each of the conquerors' exploits in the New World for crushing the political autonomy of local municipalities and aristocratic houses in Spain itself, soon became suspicious of the apparent resurgence of feudal power in the New World and began a political campaign aimed at the centralization of administrative authority over the conquered territories in the New World. Cortés himself was eventually supplanted as the supreme authority over Mexico by royal bureaucrats (*audiencia*) and the vice-regal court that were sent by the Crown. Also, the neo-feudal

institution of *encomienda* came increasingly under political assault by imperial officials – an assault that was aided also by the public campaigns of clerics such as Bartolomé de Las Casas, who (often rightly) indicted the "injustice" of the conquest and the "cruelty" of the Spanish *encomenderos* in their treatment of the Indians (see Brading 1991).

Although the Crown had to negotiate on several occasions with the conquerors in complicated legal battles regarding its long-term plans to revoke the *encomiendas* that it had originally granted to individual conquerors and their heirs "in perpetuity," the passing of the so-called New Laws during the 1540s effected the gradual replacement of the *encomienda* with a compromise solution – the *repartimiento*, a rationed and rotational recruitment system that essentially divided the available Native labor between the conquerors and the vice-regal government (see Gibson 1964: 222–4; also Sauer 1966). In the Central Valley of Mexico, this transformation was in part also driven by the vice-regal government's increasing demand for Native labor in order to undertake grand architectural projects, such as the construction of huge dykes and the *deagüe* (drainage system), especially after several devastating floods during the 1550s. While flooding had already been a problem in pre-conquest times and had prompted the construction of dams, the threat of flooding was perceived as more acute by the Spanish population, whose lifestyle was further removed from the amphibious living and *chinampa* (floating island) agriculture of the Aztecs. Consequently, courses of rivers and streams were shifted and new dykes were constructed, which required vast amounts of lumber and labor.

This system of dual exploitation by rationing and rotating labor, however, had devastating consequences on the Indian communities, further aggravating the demographic collapse in the Native population already begun by the introduction of European diseases. When, as a result, the declining available labor force failed to meet the demands made on it by the various sectors of rapidly growing white society by the end of the sixteenth century, the *repartimiento* system came under increasing criticism from the clergy and imperial officials as one of "compulsion and abuse" (Gibson 1964: 233). By and by, it lost support and was formally abolished in 1632, being replaced by the institution of *hacienda*, a proto-capitalist rural estate based on recompensated Indian labor on large lots of privately owned land typically acquired with currency from the Crown by wealthy merchants and bureaucrats residing in the cities (see Mörner 1973: 185; Gibson 1964: 323–6). While *encomienda* had depended on an indigenous population without radical change in its traditional methods of production (in effect perpetuating the system of tribute labor initiated by the Aztecs), *hacienda* was based on the availability of the cheap labor of a rural proletariat whose productivity was governed not by the immediate needs of the regional population but assimilated to a European tradition of agriculture in an expanding transatlantic market. Thus, traditional Indian communities were destroyed and populations further declined, causing the social demise also of the neo-feudal class of the conquerors, who had lived off the labor of the Indians they had held in *encomienda* in a neo-feudal household economy.

In part due to these internal environmental and social developments and in part due to an increasingly aggressive imperial policy, the former estate economy of New

Spain was increasingly becoming an economic colony of Castile. Despite the implementation of vice-royalties and *audiencias* in the Americas (intended to decentralize the political administration of an enormous transoceanic empire), political authority was in effect concentrated in Spain, mainly in Seville, with the *Consejo de Indians* (Royal Council of the Indies) presiding over all legislation and the *Casa de Contratación* (Board of Trade) controlling all commercial activities in the Americas. By royal decree, the colonies were prohibited from trading with foreign nationals and colonial manufacturing was severely restricted, which considerably inhibited economic development in the colonies. Spain hereby aimed to eliminate the threat of competition from its own colonies, while securing a market for its products. Industry and manufacture were supposed to remain in Spain, with the colonies merely providing metals and raw materials that would be exchanged for finished products via the fleet (see Haring 1947).

During the last decades of the sixteenth century, shrinking economic opportunities in New Spain had driven colonial merchants to look elsewhere for advancement. They found these opportunities, in accordance with time-honored tradition, by looking west – in the Pacific trade in Chinese fabric and Peruvian minerals. Soon enough, Mexican merchants had cornered most of the South American textile market, thereby dealing a severe blow to the textile manufacturers of Spain, particularly the silk producers of Toledo and Granada, who sorely missed the Peruvian silver that now went to China. So thriving had the Mexican Pacific trade become that it was regarded, as Jonathan Israel has written, as a "serious menace" to the Spanish economy by imperial officials in Seville and Madrid. The Crown therefore launched a series of attacks on the Mexican Pacific trade, first stipulating that no more than three ships with a maximum weight of 400 tons each be allowed to sail between Mexico and Peru annually and forbidding the carrying of any Oriental fabrics on the way there and that of gold on the way back, and finally, in 1639, suspending all trade between Mexico and Peru indefinitely. This plunged New Spain into a severe economic crisis that lasted through much of the seventeenth century (see Israel 1975: 99–101).

The gradual but steady erosion during the sixteenth century of the neo-feudal lifestyle that the conquerors deemed as their "right" and as essential to their sense of identity as a New World aristocracy, in general, and the Crown's active political involvement in this process in particular (such as the passing of the New Laws), led to serious resentment, social unrest, and even open rebellion throughout the Spanish Americas, as in the cases of the *conjuración* of Martín Cortés, the Conqueror's son, in Mexico, or the insurrection of Gonzalo Pizarro in Peru. In 1561, Lope de Aguirre wrote a letter to Philip II, in which he angrily reminded the monarch that "For 24 years now I have served you in Peru, conquering Indians, founding towns, and fighting battles in your name, always to the best of my power and ability." He charged that "I firmly believe, most excellent King and lord, that to me and my companions you have been nothing but cruel and ungrateful," vowing to "rebel until death against you for your ingratitude" and declaring his independence from the Spanish monarchy (in Moreno 1961: 84).

Not surprisingly, such challenges to the imperial authority caused considerable concern for the Crown, as well as for imperial functionaries and ecclesiastic officials. How could the transformation of loyal Spaniards into insubordinate rebels in America be explained? Soon theories emerged that the conquerors' and creoles' insubordination must be due to the influences of the unruly environment and climate of the New World. "I do not marvel at the great defects and imbecility of those who are born in these lands," the Franciscan missionary and ethnographer Bernadino de Sahagún wrote in the 1580s,

> because the Spaniards who inhabit them, and even more those who are born there, assume these bad inclinations; those who are born there become like the Indians, and although they look like Spaniards, in their constitution they are not; those who are born in Spain, if they do not take care, change within a few years after they arrive in these parts; and this I think is due to the climate or the constellations in these parts. (Sahagún 1938 III: 82; see also Lavallé 1993; Mazzotti 2000)

Geocultural theories such as this one were quickly used to rationalize the systematic exclusion of the creoles from prominent positions in the new vice-regal order of power. In all of its more than 300-year history, there was not a single viceroy in New Spain who was of Mexican birth; only two archbishops of Mexico had been American born; and all of the judges presiding over the Audiencia of Mexcio had been European-born Spaniards, despite a petition by the Mexican City council in 1637 demanding that at least half of the seats should be reserved for American-born creoles. In the course of the sixteenth century there developed "a social, cultural, and even ethnic dimension to the estrangement between bureaucracy and colonists in that the former was staffed mainly by peninsulars while the latter were predominantly creole" (Israel 1975: 88).

The Cultural Geography of Colonial Narrative in New Spain: From Bernal Díaz to Alonso Ramírez

The social marginalization of the creoles, resulting from the environmental, demographic, economic, and political changes taking place in New Spain during the course of the sixteenth century, is a persistent theme in colonial New Spanish (as well as in Spanish American) narrative, from Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* (1632) to Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora's *Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez* (1690). While, certainly, there are important differences between these two texts – including a temporal difference of about a century and a difference in the conception of historiographic authorship (the latter being a collaboration of two authors) – their formal, ideological, and epistemological continuities and distinctiveness *vis-à-vis* their peninsular counterparts – the chronicles of the Discovery and Conquest and the picaresque novel, respectively – point to the role that cultural geography plays in the divergent evolution of literary traditions in peripheries and centers of early modern transoceanic empires. In particular, the primary importance accorded to eye-witness testimony in both narratives serves as a rhetorical springboard for a colonial critique that

unmasks the contradictions of Spanish imperial patrimonialism by exposing the unequal status of the creoles' citizenship.

Bernal Díaz (ca. 1492–1584) was a commoner when he left his native Andalusía and when he set out from the Caribbean base in Cuba as a foot soldier in Cortés's army in 1519 in order to conquer the western *tierra firme*. He wrote his *Historia verdadera* only many years later in the form of his personal memoirs and did not, in fact, finish it until 1568, when he was already an old man and had established himself as an *encomendero* in Guatemala (see Himmerich y Valencia 1991: 150–5). His history was never published during his lifetime and appeared only well into the seventeenth century, in Madrid in 1632 – the same year that the *repartimiento* system was formally abolished in the Spanish Americas and almost three decades after the publication of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* (1605) in Spain. By that time, the conqueror of new worlds had become something of a quaint anachronism, a tragicomic figure of fun and fiction at a time of conscript armies, mercantilist economics, and absolutist monarchies.

The widely popular early parts of Bernal's *Historia verdadera* dramatically related the journey from Cuba to Mexico, the skirmishes during the advance on Tenochtitlan, the Spaniards' initial entry into the legendary Aztec city, the subsequent battles, the *noche triste* of the Spaniards' retreat, and the final fall of the city in 1521. It thereby purported to present an unofficial, though more "true," history in counter-distinction to the official histories written by the Spanish imperial court historians, who had appropriated Las Casas' condemnation of the conquest. While Gómara and Las Casas had each positioned themselves on opposite poles in the political and legal debates at Valladolid during the early 1550s over the question of whether Spain's military conquests in the New World had been a "just war" and whether the conquerors had a right to enslave the conquered peoples, Bernal, writing two decades later, gave voice to a distinct tenet of local patriotism in New Spain: the defense of the "rights" of the conquerors and their descendants to the spoils of the conquest during the newly emerging debate over the question of whether the royal grants of *encomiendas* and honors to the original conquistadors were hereditary; as well as the claim that the rewards of the conquest had not been equally distributed among the all participants from the beginning. But while Bernal thereby sided with the lawyers of the conquerors on the question of the justness of the wars, he also bitterly refuted López de Gómara, who had glorified Cortés' miraculous individual achievements. By contrast, Bernal emphasized the collective nature of the conquest of Mexico, which would have been impossible, he argues, without the bravery of the common soldiers such as himself. With characteristic metahistorical irony Bernal debunks López de Gómara's providentialist account of Cortés' magical victories in his *Historia de la conquista de México* (1552), rewriting it as a story of hardship and toil. He critiques, for example, the Renaissance historian's story of the miraculous appearance of Santiago in the midst of battle in support of the Spaniards, remarking that he, "como pecador, no fuese digno de verlo" [a sinner, must not have been worthy enough to witness it]:

> And if it had been as Gómara said, we would have been bad Christians indeed, who when God sent us his apostles did not every day after acknowledge and return thanks

> and pay reverence to the church, and please God; and would to heaven that it were so, but until I read his history, I had never heard of it. (Díaz del Castillo 1980: 56)

By the same token, he asserts that the credit for converting the Indians belongs not to the monks but solely "a nosotros los verdaderos conquistadore, que lo descubrimos y conquistamos" (ibid: 479). In his strongly polemical account, Bernal explicitly and specifically set out to refute Las Casas' versions on strategic points of contention, such as the infamous Cholula massacre, which was not, he argued, the result of the proverbial "cruelty" of the conquerors, as the Dominican monk had claimed, but rather the just punishment of the Natives for their cruel practice of human sacrifice:

> Let us anticipate and say that these were the great cruelties that the Bishop of Chiapas, Fray Bartolomé de las Casas, wrote about and never ceased talking about, asserting that for no reason whatever, or only for our pastime and because we wanted to, we inflicted that punishment, and he even says it so artfully in his book that he would make those believe, who neither saw it themselves nor know about it, that these and other cruelties about which he writes were true (as he states them) while it is altogether the reverse of true. It did not happen as he describes it. (Ibid: 150–1)

Throughout his history Bernal therefore aimed to refute the learned Dominican "señor obispo" with the rhetoric of first-hand and eyewitness experience. In his claim of writing a history more "true" than those written both by Las Casas and Gómara, Bernal ostensibly professed a self-consciousness and humility about his lack of eloquence, his provincialism, and his humble social standing within the imperial order that is self-consciously in opposition to the elevated Renaissance prose style of Lopéz de Gómara's historiographic rhetoric. Remembering two Peninsular *licenciados* who had asked to inspect the manuscript of his history in order to see how it differed from the works of Gómara, he ironically remarks, "y yo les presté un borrador. Pareció me que de varones sabios siempre se pega algo de su ciencia a los sin letras como yo soy" [I accordingly presented them with a draft for their study with the respect that is due, it seemed to me, to scholars from illiterates such as me] (ibid: 590–1). Bernal self-consciously assumes here the humble role of a provincial *pícaro* who turns his professed lack in classical eloquence into a powerful rhetorical tool to authenticate the "truth" value of what we might call his colonial counter-history to the imperial history of the conquest (see Adorno 1992). As far as its "retórica," the *licenciado* finds his history most agreeable, written

> in the colloquial style of speaking used in Old Castile, which is most agreeable these days, for it lacks the flowery reasoning and golden politeness in which writing is commonly dressed, and beneath which truth is locked up by pretty words. (Ibid: 591)

Despite their praise for Bernal's non-literate, colloquial style, however, the licentiates also criticized him for arrogating to himself too many "judgments," especially in his praise of himself, which he should have left up to others, they argue, by

producing “testigos, como suelen poner y alegar los coronistas, que aprueban con otros libros de cosas pasadas, . . . porque yo no soy testigo de mí mismo” [witnesses, as the chroniclers are in the habit of doing, who prove the events with other books, . . . because I am not my own witness] (ibid: 591). To this, Bernal dryly replies that his credits are attested to in the letters from Cortés and the emperor himself, which he keeps in his possession; and as to too much praise, he counters that if he hadn’t praised the unsung heroes among the common soldiers in the conquest of Mexico, nobody would ever know about them except for the clouds and birds who happened to witness the events.

> Perhaps they intended that the clouds or the birds that then passed by high above tell the story? And did Gómara mean to write it when he wrote to His Majesty, or Illescas, or Cortés? What I see from those writings and in their chronicles is that all of them for ever only exalt Cortés while enshrouding our glorious deeds, with which we exalt the same captain to being a marquis and to having all the estate and fame and renown that he has . . . ; but without having a true account, how could they write, but with the taste of their palate, without mistakes, except for the correspondences that they took from the same marquis? And I say this, that when Cortés first wrote to His Majesty, from his pen ever flowed pearls and gold for ink and always in his own praise and never of us brave soldiers. (Ibid: 593)

Thus, the aging conqueror Bernal Díaz articulates the complaint that the conquerors of the New World have not been given the respect and rewards that are due to them. Despite its emphasis on the glories of the conquest, *Historia verdadera* ended on a note that was a far cry from the triumphalism of the early chronicles, such as López de Gómara’s *Historia de la conquista*. The world in which Bernal sat down to write was a very different one from the one he describes in the early parts of his history, the glories of the conquest now in the distant past and the neo-feudal class of conquerors and their *encomendero* descendants having become a dying caste in the social order of vice-regal New Spain. By the end of the 1560s, only 5 out of the 560 Spaniards who had participated in the conquest of Mexico survived. And while their heirs still held a total of 480 *encomiendas* in 1560, only 140 remained by the end of the decade (see Chevalier 1963: 118–19; Young 1983). All of the conquerors, Bernal complained, who had suffered the “grandes peligros y trabajos, así de hambre y sed, e infinitas fatigas” of the conquest were now poor and passing their lives in toil and misery. “A esto digo . . . que de todos los que he recontado, ahora somos vivos de los de Cortés cinco, y estamos muy viejos y dolientes de enfermedades, y lo peor de todo muy pobres y cargados de hijos e hijas para casar, y nietos, y con poca renta, y así pasamos nuestras vidas con trabajos y miserias” [And this I say . . . that there remain alive now five of the companions of Cortés, and we are very old, and bowed down with infirmities, and very poor, and with a heavy charge of sons to provide for, and of daughters to marry off, and grandchildren to maintain, and little rent to do it with! And, thus we pass our lives, in pain, in labor, and in sorrow] (Díaz del Castillo 1955: 585).

While some Spanish American creoles inhabiting the social proximity of the vice-regal courts of Mexico or Peru were able to retain certain venues for social advancement

within the new order, especially in the religious orders and in the universities (see Higgins 2000), by the second half of the seventeenth century the social demise of the neo-feudal class of first conquerors thriving of local estate economies based on Indian labor had been completed. Their creole descendants retained only the faint memory of what they imagined to be a once glorious, though now distant, past.

In 1690 the Mexican savant Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora (1645–1700) published a narrative by the title *Los infortunios que Alonso Ramírez natural de la Ciudad de S. Juan de Puerto Rico padeció assi en poder de Ingleses Piratas* (The Misfortunes that Alonso Ramírez, native to the city of San Juan of Puerto Rico, suffered while in the power of English Pirates). A professor of mathematics and astrology at the University of Mexico, as well as one of the few creoles to hold the position of "Royal Cosmographer" of New Spain, the urban Sigüenza y Góngora benefited to a certain degree from his proximity and good relations with the vice-regal court – even though he was expelled from the Jesuit order under precarious circumstances (see Leonard 1929: 46). Nevertheless, he harbored enough resentment about the pervasive European biases against the American creoles that he sympathized with a poor compatriot from Puerto Rico, Alonso, who showed up at his door one day and with whom the Mexican professor had little else in common. Sigüenza y Góngora later published Alonso's narrative in part because it allegorized the historical experience of the creoles in Spanish America from the historical vantage point of the late seventeenth century. It tells the life story of Alonso, the son of a poor ship carpenter who had set out from the economically depressed Caribbean island to go west in search of fame and fortune – to discover a "moda para ser rico" (Sigüenza y Góngora 1944: 20). But having arrived on *tierra firme*, he soon found himself not the conqueror of fabulous cities but rather a down-and-out stranger in a land of millions like him. Pressed by economic hardship, he saw no other remedy than to place his fate into the patrimonial hands of his monarch by enlisting as a mariner in service to the Crown. During his first tour en route from Acapulco to Manila, however, he was captured by the fleet of the Protestant English pirate William Dampier and taken against his will on a circum-global journey – across the Pacific and Indian Oceans, up the coast of southern Africa, and across the Atlantic to Brazil. Finally, he was released in the Caribbean on a small vessel and landed under extreme circumstances in Yucatán. From there, he made his way to Mexico City, where his "círculo de trabajos" comes to an end at the house of Sigüenza y Góngora (ibid: 12). Thus, the narrative that begins by retelling the story of a Cortés 150 years before him ends in the creole's experience of *desengaño* (disillusionment) in the face of poverty, hardship, and, finally, captivity.

As literary historians have often noted, the narrative's plot hereby represents a rhetorical inversion of the narrative models inherited from the sixteenth-century Renaissance chronicles of the conquest and ushers in the narrative genre of the picaresque (see González 1987; Gonález-Pérez 1983). Whereas the chronicles of the conquest had teemed with magic possibilities for the individual, *Infortunios* portrays the individual as a powerless and passive victim of the forces of material existence. Formalist critics have therefore argued that in its modern sociographic and ethnographic "realism,"

Infortunios represents a sort of missing link in the evolution of the Spanish American novel, thus connecting the Peninsular Spanish picaresque tradition of *El Lazarillo de Tormes*, Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache*, or Quevedo's *El Buscón*, on the one end, with the rise of the novel in Latin America during the nineteenth century, on the other (see Anderson-Imbert 1969: 95; Franco 1994: 31; also Arrom 1963: 80). New historicist critics, by contrast, have turned the critical attention away from questions of generic form and toward questions of ideological content. They have argued that this narrative critiques the histories of the conquest, particularly Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *Historia verdadera*, with which it seems to establish a special dialogical relationship (see Ross 1995).

Yet it is significant to note that *Infortunios* is not a piece of prose fiction in the Peninsular generic traditions of the picaresque or the pastoral novel, but rather the "true history" of the lowly Alonso as transcribed by his Mexican creole compatriot Sigüenza y Góngora – despite its formal similarity and the historical obscurity of its narrator. Neither is it, politically, a history of the counter-conquest in the tradition of the Las Casian critique of the cruelties and injustice of the conquest and of the pretensions and degeneracy of the creoles. From the point of view of the cultural geography of the Spanish empire, *Infortunios* is a continuation, rather than an inversion, of the creoles' neo-feudal critique of Spanish imperialism. It hereby lies very much in the tradition of Bernal Díaz's *Historia verdadera*, the temporal distance between these two texts notwithstanding.

Thus, although no external evidence has been found that would shed light on the historical person of Alonso Ramírez, or even corroborate his existence, Estelle Irizarry has recently published the results of a computer analysis that subjected *Infortunios* to a linguistic comparison with other texts authored by Sigüenza, such as *Alboroto y motín de 1692*, *Mercurio Volante*, and *Relación de lo sucedido a la Armada de Barlovento*. Her analysis produced strong evidence that Alonso was indeed a real person and, as the oral teller of the story, co-author of the book (see Irizarry 1991). The protagonist's geocultural location in the narrative provides the context for his socioeconomic predicament. Thus, the narrator tells us that his father had come – like most of the sixteenth-century conquerors – from Andalusía. Once, Puerto Rico was a thriving island, Alonso reports. But with the native labor force having died off, the gold mines are no longer being worked.

> The natives are now hard pressed in their fidelity and honor since the wealthy gold veins which gave the island its name are no longer worked because the original inhabitants who provided the labor have died off. Also, the vehemence of fearful hurricanes whipped the cacao trees that provided for their owners a substitute for gold. As a result the rest of the islanders became poor. (Sigüenza y Góngora 1962: 8–9)

As gold was being replaced by agricultural consumer products for export under the new mercantilist policies of the Habsburgs aimed at a balance of trade, the island was left vulnerable to the forces of an imperial market and dependant on Peninsular Spanish demands. The creoles' economic hardship – what Alonso calls the "fatalidad de mi

estrella" (ibid: 20) – is the consequence of his island's economic integration within a transatlantic mercantilist system which left colonial production economically undiversified, unsustainable, and permanently underdeveloped. It reflects the beginnings of what Immanuel Wallerstein has called the "geoculture" of modern "world systems" of transoceanic economic peripheries and center that formed the "manifestation of, and the undergirding for, global capitalism" (Wallerstein 1974, 1991).

What was once possible for all (whites), even with "few qualities," is now possible only for Peninsular Spaniards, who are able to "improve their lot" – typically during their tenure in imperial office or by marrying the daughters of wealthy creole *hacendaderos*. What remains for impoverished creoles such as Alonso is a morality of self-abnegation, subordination, and sacrifice, the resignation to the irreconcilable rift between New World utopia and New World reality in modern vice-regal New Spain. To be sure, Alonso also finds golden cities of riches and splendor as he sets out on his westward enterprise; but they are not *his* cities – not fabulous Aztec cities that were for his taking, but rather impenetrable Spanish citadels from which he, an American creole, was excluded as a stranger in his own land. Upon his arrival at Puebla, for example, he marvels at the riches he beholds but laments that "it is a great pity that the greatness and magnificence of such a superb city should not spread through the world engraved by a glazier's diamond on plates of gold" (Sigüenza y Góngora 1962: 12). The glamorous cities of vice-regal New Spain afford the creole no opportunities for economic progress but only occasion for bitter disillusionment. After evoking the sixteenth-century promises of western conquests, his descriptions of his actual experience in the New World are cast in the baroque language of *desengaño* (disenchantment):

> Disabused in the course of my voyage that I would ever escape from my sphere and thinking about those who with few qualities had managed to improve their lot, I dismissed from my mind those ideas which had been perplexing my imagination for several years. (Ibid: 23)

There is still a hint that the reason for the socioeconomic predicament of the creoles may be their pseudo-aristocratic pretension and their unrealistic expectations – in "pasar la vida con más descanso" (ibid: 22). Ultimately, however, the present socioeconomic *desengaño* is attributed to the unequal distribution of wealth and economic opportunities in the Americas between creoles and peninsulars in the new imperial order.

Thus, *Infortunios* does not tell the story of an individual's moral and religious pilgrimage – as was common in much of seventeenth-century picaresque fiction – but emphasizes the material strife between groups of people demarcated by social, religious, racial, and national boundaries. While *Infortunios* formally resembles the Spanish picaresque in some regards – in its episodic structure, an allegorical dimension, and the lowly origins of the protagonist/narrator, for example – the ideological, rhetorical, and epistemological difference between this colonial "true history" and the Peninsular tradition in prose fiction affords us a welcome opportunity to reflect on the causes for the conspicuous absence of prose fiction throughout the colonial Americas in general (see Guillén 1971: 75–85).

As Beatriz González observes in an important essay, the novel was born in Europe when the world "was slowly revealed as a 'reality ordered like prose,' when man was freed from the system of feudal relations and began to recognize the significance of his own individuality. It was born with bourgeois society and with a practice that permitted adopting a popular point of view" (González 1987: 11). But the nascent colonial Spanish American narrative, González continues, participated in a very different manner in these historical processes: "if the [colonial] narrators (chroniclers, historians) participated in the demystification of the Middle Ages and saw the world as a 'reality ordered like prose,' " the society which they founded was based in a system of relations that perpetrated the "medieval feudal practices in a world which entered in the epoch of mercantilism." American colonial societies developed social and economic infrastructures that were *different from*, though *co-dependent with*, those of Europe in the spatial dialectic of imperial social and economic development. Due to this difference in socioeconomic structure *vis-à-vis* the imperial metropole, the colonial peripheries participated differently also in imperial ideological transformations and formed distinct genres of prose narrative *at the same time* as the novel was developing in Europe. These distinctly colonial forms of prose narrative, González argues, often form by hybridizing European genres, thereby

> transgress[ing] against official censure, and, in a double game of being and not being able to, assume an enmasked condition. The masks envelop the heterodoxy: they adopt forms of chronicles, histories, travel accounts, biographies, hagiographies, verse narratives. They represent an effort of constituting discourses that are distanced from the dangerous anti-literary program of the "novel." Therefore, the Latin American narrative produced other forms – ancillary or peripheral – but not like the novel proper . . . The autobiographical form present in the colonial narrative should not be understood as an especular reproduction of the European forms. If it was cultivated in simultaneous form to the development of the novel it is because there were a series of analogous historical conditions which permitted the dependent societies to use European cultural models and to adopt them to the demands of colonial reality. (Ibid: 11, 18)

In this context, the continuities between the two stories told by the sixteenth-century conqueror Bernal and his seventeenth-century creole descendant Alonso are important because they call our attention to the discrete cultural geographies across time in the literary evolutions of colonial literary forms on the one hand and metropolitan ones on the other, despite certain formal similarities. First, Alonso's fate is significantly not ascribed to the aristocratic and chivalric values of misguided conquerors – as had the narratives of the counter-conquest such as Cabeza de Vaca's *Relación* – but rather to the ineffectualness of the imperial state in the protection of the conquerors' descendants against foreign invaders, after it had effectively stripped them of their cape and sword. Second, *Infortunios* is neither a literary hoax in the tradition of the *falsos crónicas* such as Fray Antonio de Guevara's *Libro áureo de Marco Aurelio* (1522) and *Reloj de príncipes* (1529) – widely in circulation in Spain and Spanish America during the seventeenth century (see González Pérez 1983: 190) – nor a self-consciously fictional

travel parody in the Peninsular tradition of picaresque prose fiction – equally popular in the Americas and in Europe at the time (see Leonard 1992: 270–312) – pointing the way to the modern novel. Rather, like Bernal Díaz's *Historia verdadera*, it is a colonial "true history," a first-person *relación* (account) of a historical event told by an observing, though ostensibly marginally literate, eyewitness that has sometimes also been seen as belonging to the non-fictional colonial genre of the "testimonial," especially in its separation of the semiliterate narrator (Alonso) from the literate transcriber (Sigüenza) (see López 1996). Thus, the allegorical discourse of moral edification prevalent in much picaresque fiction, directed "downward" in Counter-Reformation social space, is firmly interlocked in this colonial prose narrative with a historical discourse of political critique directed "upward" in imperial geopolitical space. While the Spanish picaresque novels of the Baroque parodied the sixteenth and seventeenth-century "true histories," emphasizing instead moral or poetic truth, in colonial "true histories" such as *Historia verdadera* or *Infortunios*, though doubtlessly containing elements of fictional or allegorical embellishment, the claim to historicity remains fundamental to the ideological and epistemic critique uttered from a distinctly colonial location within imperial social space. The significant difference between the non-fictional and fictional forms of prose discourse is not in the question of the "factuality" of the events narrated but rather in the contract that the text makes between author and reader: whereas in the emerging metropolitan literary discourses of prose fiction, the reader knows to ask questions about the text's poetical or moral truth, in the true history (or "testimonial") the reader asks questions about the "authenticity" or historical truth of the text, which would render it valuable as source material in historiographic and political rhetoric.

Conclusion

I have suggested that the conceptual vocabulary and methodology of cultural geography may hold significant relevance for the current historiographic debate about colonial American literature, as early Americanists have begun to declare their independence from proto-nationalist metanarratives that would treat colonial American texts merely as the handmaidens for national literary traditions culminating during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. By theorizing comparatively both the diversity of literatures in the multiple cultural regions of the Americas and by inquiring what "colonial" meant in each regional context, not as a category of time but rather of space, a cultural-geographic approach may allow us to see not only what is distinct about a literature of any given cultural region in the New World but also what these colonial literatures may have in common across the hemisphere *vis-à-vis* European literary histories in the respective languages. My example here has been New Spain, where the cultural diffusion of Spanish feudalism, strongly inflected by the experience of the reconquest of the Spanish Peninsula from the Moors, was initially supported by the pre-Columbian social and economic infrastructure already

in place in New Spain at the time of the conquest. As the Spanish conquerors replaced or infiltrated the Aztec dynastic elites by murder, contagion, or intermarriage, a uniquely hybrid society developed with all of the racial hierarchies of most creole societies. (In the eighteenth century, "certificates of whiteness" were bought with frequency by creoles who could not assume to fall within that category). During the course of the sixteenth century, New Spain became increasingly reduced to a colony of Castile in economic, social, and cultural terms. Geographic ideologies, such as ideas of the natural "inferiority" of the New World and of creole cultures *vis-à-vis* the Old World, were crucial in this process of imperial consolidation. It is possibly for this reason that the "debate over creole culture" became a theme of "powerful continuity in European responses [to America]" throughout the Atlantic world (Kupperman 1995: 20), as other European nations, such as the French, the British, and the Dutch (though to varying degrees), also aimed to impose a geographical order that would place the center of empire in Europe. Yet the distinctiveness of the cultural processes of diffusion and creolization at work in New Spain is underlined by the miserable failure of the many attempts to replicate the New Spanish model in other regions of the Americas, as is illustrated by the first decade or so of the English colonial experience in Virginia. But in each case, the distinctively "colonial" societies that developed in the various cultural regions of the Americas developed also distinctive literary traditions that cannot adequately be understood within the paradigms of European literary history, but must be seen within the spatial dialectics of early modern transoceanic imperialism. In the early modern Atlantic world, Old World and New World cultures evolved simultaneously and co-dependently within transoceanic imperial systems. Thus, mercantilist economies, absolute monarchies, and nation-states developed in the geographical cores of empire partially as a result of neo-feudalism on the colonial periphery, while colonial creole patriotism (and later nationalism) in the Americas developed partially as a result of mercantilist economies and absolute monarchies in Europe. By the same token, the literary histories of the Old World and the New evolved co-dependently in a cultural interchange between colonial peripheries and metropolitan centers within transoceanic empires.

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4
Textual Investments: Economics and Colonial American Literatures

Michelle Burnham

The first letter written from America to Europe centers around its writer's determination to reach the luxury trade markets of Asia, which he believed could not be far from the islands where he'd landed. Columbus' letter records his repeated efforts to engage in trade with the Natives, but these famous exchanges – of Old World "trifles" for the "valuable things" of the New World – are clearly in the service of gaining assistance in reaching a more abundant source of Europe's most desired commodities, gold and spices. The letter, like the *Diario*, thus tends to pair documented commercial exchanges with linguistic ones that seek information about the location of greater riches and products. Only near the letter's end, however, does Columbus frame this economic pursuit within the terms of his transoceanic investment relationship with Castile. It bears remembering that his letter is addressed to an accountant, Raphael Sanchez, treasurer for King Ferdinand, and that the royal counting house posed a clear contrast to the trading Natives, who appear astonishingly "satisfied even with a very small return, or with nothing" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 25).

Well aware that this description does not apply to his Spanish backers, Columbus gets down to business near his letter's conclusion, announcing:

> Finally, that I may compress in few words the brief account of our departure and quick return, and the gain, I promise this, that if I am supported by our most invincible sovereigns with a little of their help, as much gold can be supplied as they will need, indeed as much of spices, of cotton, of chewing gum . . . also as much of aloes wood, and as many slaves for the navy, as their majesties will wish to demand. (Ibid: 26)

In the space of a sentence, Columbus appeals for further royal financial support in exchange for a promise of economic returns that will far exceed their investment. Moreover, the letter delivers this scenario of multiplying returns – in which "a little"

investment converts into "as much gold" and other commodities as the monarchs could possibly want – in a deliberate stylistic economy of compression, in a language of "few words." This sudden terseness, of course, contrasts not only with the letter's earlier descriptions of the landscape and its inhabitants, but with the letter's remainder, which goes on to marvel at how the Christian God has enabled "so great a victory and gift" (ibid: 27).

Writing well over a century later, from an English Reformed Protestant rather than a Spanish Catholic tradition, the Separatist Puritan William Bradford begins his journal of the Plymouth settlement in New England more or less where Columbus' first letter ended: with a sense of religious momentousness, preceded by a commitment to write in "a plain style, with singular regard unto the simple truth in all things" (Bradford 1993: 3). And Plymouth is, of course, at least as troubled by the demands and difficulties of transoceanic investment relations as was the Columbian expedition. Indeed, Bradford's history *Of Plymouth Plantation* becomes increasingly preoccupied with the messy financial details of the settlers' relationship with the merchant adventurers back in England who funded their journey, as well as with the interloping traders who competed with Plymouth for local fur trade profits. Whereas Columbus' letter makes new promises and proposes a contract extension, however, *Of Plymouth Plantation* serves largely as a record of the failure of past contracts, a commentary on the deceptiveness of the letters written and promises made by merchants. The returns anticipated by the shareholders in England repeatedly fail to materialize, and Plymouth's leaders take on and struggle to repay the large debt that remains in the wake of the joint-stock company's collapse. In the face of growing competition for the New England fur trade, one after another deceptive merchant is described by Bradford as a self-interested misuser of both money and language, leading him to warn his readers to " 'Put not your trust in princes,' (much less in merchants)" (ibid:101).

Richard Ligon's 1657 *True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes* at one point addresses the complexities of such transcontinental investment relations, by urging his readers to look at the situation from both sides of the Atlantic, rather than to imitate those men who "lye here at home [in England], and expect great profit in their adventures [investments]," without considering the risk and labor required on the part of the plantation masters in Barbados (Ligon 1970: 57). Of course, Ligon writes this book from inside an English debtor prison, hoping to make enough money from its sales to pay the debts that originally prompted him to escape England for the West Indies to begin with. Moreover, his book's appeal no doubt resulted both from its detailed depictions of the beastly moral and economic excesses of so many colonial planters – whose gain of "very great and vast estates" as a result of "the sweet Negotiation of Sugar" (ibid: 96) has led them to be "over-ballanc'd with avarice and lucre" – and its careful calculations illustrating just how to acquire "such a fortune as this, upon a small beginning" (ibid: 117). By the time Richard Ligon wrote, at least, colonial American writing has generated its own economy of print consumption, and become itself a commodity.

The rhetorical negotiations performed by these three very different texts clearly respond to shared experiences of desire, disappointment, and debt, but within profoundly different transatlantic investment matrices. The Columbian voyage was backed by the wealth and imperial hopes of the Castilian monarchs, while Plymouth plantation was funded largely by shareholding London merchants expecting profitable returns from the fishing trade. Richard Ligon eventually cashed in, through writing, on the experiences of colonial travel that were ironically impelled by debt. But in all three cases writing itself works to measure and to manage, to revise or renew, transatlantic economic expectations and relations. The form, style, and even vocabulary of these texts both shape and respond to the materiality of this long-distance rhetorical situation, suggesting that the early modern global economy and early modern literary aesthetics might have helped to sponsor each other. In the early colonial texts mentioned above, for example, we often see language deliberately contract into "few words" or a "plain style," and at other moments to expand or inflate. What kinds of financial, affective, or epistemic readerly investments do such linguistic compressions and enlargements encourage? How did long-distance language negotiate the transoceanic transfer of truth and trust, risk and loss, desire and dispossession? How might transnational literary forms like the baroque, the pastoral, or the picaresque be understood in relation to transnational commerce in materials, products, and people? And how might renewed attention to the economics of mercantilism and transcontinental colonialism that literally underwrote so much early American textual production, reshape traditional narratives of colonial American literary history? This essay draws on recent interdisciplinary scholarship in order to put the economic contexts of colonial American writing into dialogue with the linguistic, aesthetic, and sensational economies constructed within and between colonial texts, and sketches out some possibilities for bringing a materialist rhetoric and a materialist aesthetics to bear on the comparative study of American literatures, particularly of the earlier colonial period.

Adventure and the Economic Art of Persuasion

Early modern transatlantic travel was, of course, extremely expensive and extremely risky. These ocean-crossing ventures of exploration or settlement required a substantial amount of capital, and had the potential to result in enormous profits or enormous losses. To use the conventional language of early modern English travel writers, those who did not risk their "persons," by traveling as explorers, soldiers, or settlers on the expedition itself, were invited to risk instead their "purses," in the expectation of the profit or glory that would result from its discoveries. Therefore the "adventure" (in the sense of a hazardous risk of self, a daring feat) taken by explorers or settlers, was matched and enabled by the "adventure" (in the sense of a pecuniary risk, a speculation) made by those with sufficient capital to invest – sometimes monarchs, but more often gentry, and, increasingly by the seventeenth century, merchants, who in many

cases had already amassed personal wealth through transnational trade. In this way, the consolidating commercial networks linking Europe with Asia and the Americas provided not only the incentive but also the means for nearly every transatlantic journey, from the expeditions by Christopher Columbus, Pedro Álvares Cabral, and Hernán Cortés, to the voyages associated with John Smith, Henry Hudson, Samuel Champlain, and John Winthrop. Those commercial networks also, of course, provided an audience for the writings that resulted from these journeys.

As has often been noted, the remarkable Spanish expeditions of Columbus and Cortés set the model for such sixteenth-century European voyagers as Jacques Cartier, Martin Frobisher, and Walter Ralegh, who set out across the Atlantic in search of mineral deposits or northwest passages to Asia, on expeditions of conquest funded by monarchs or gentry investors eager to see France or England compete with Spain for wealth and power. But by the seventeenth century, in the face of enormous losses and disappointments, the economics of European transoceanic imperialism began to shift, from the Spanish model of conquest and metal extraction to the Dutch one of commercial exchange. As Anthony Pagden remarks, "it was only when it became obvious that there was no new Mexico or Peru to be conquered . . . that the British and French turned, half-reluctantly, to regard their colonies as sources not of mineral or human, but of agricultural and commercial wealth" (Pagden 1995: 68). And merchants – often inspired by transnational travel writing collections – increasingly supplied the funds for colonial ventures, in the interest less of national or personal glory than of pecuniary gain (see Rabb 1967). These investments were also increasingly organized through chartered trading companies – like the Virginia Company, the Dutch West Indies Company, or the Company of New France – that sold shares as a way of accumulating the capital and sharing the risk for such voyages, that were typically granted trade monopolies in return, and that were also systematically challenged and subverted by traders left out of these official commercial networks.

Between 1534 and 1541, Francis I supported three expeditions led by Jacques Cartier, who went in search of a passage to Asia and developed increasing hopes of finding lands that contained "immense quantities of gold, rubies, and other rich things." Cartier brought back to the king wondrous stories – about the mysterious kingdom of Saguenay, said to contain gold and silver as well as precious jewels, and other lands where people "possessing no anus, never eat nor digest" or where the inhabitants "have only one leg" (Cartier 1993:82). Such stories competed in wealth and wonder with the Spanish and Portuguese accounts of the Indies, Mexico, or Brazil, and promised to make Cartier another Columbus, Cortés, or Pero Vaz. But neither Cartier's places nor their abundant riches ever materialized. In 1614, by contrast, Samuel de Champlain – who had already been exploring in New France for some years – formed a trading company whose shares were divided between the merchants of three French cities (see Biggar 1972: 94–5). Champlain's was one in a series of French merchant companies that received a trading monopoly in exchange for promises to supply colonists. Champlain appealed for a new "monopoly of the fur-trade in this land," positioning his enterprise as one from which "the king would

derive an inestimable profit," and which he promises would avoid the problems of "so many voyages and discoveries without result, and attended with so much hardship and expense"(Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 101) – although several years later his company followed the fate of all those before it, and dissolved in the absence of both colonists and profits.

These colonial American letters, reports, travelogues, and promotional tracts are, in obvious ways, rhetorically shaped for and by their investing audiences. But this rhetorical matrix operated within a complex geography, since, as Ralph Bauer argues, colonial American prose narrative developed within both an East–West or transatlantic dialectic, between imperial metropolis and colonial periphery, and a North–South hemispheric dialectic, between the predominantly Ibero-American South and the largely Anglo-and Franco-American North (Bauer 2003: 2). The rhetorical strategies of colonial texts negotiate a complex temporal dynamic in addition to this spatial one, since they often simultaneously broker prospective and retrospective investment relations, offering, in the currency of language, both incentives for the future and returns on the past. Many early colonial adventures – like Cartier's voyages, the Pánfilo de Narváez expedition, and Ralegh's Guiana and Roanoke projects – were characterized by gigantic losses. By the end of the 1620s every single English colonial company had failed both financially and organizationally, and every single early French trading company had been dissolved; by 1674, the Dutch West Indies Company had gone bankrupt for the first of two times. Therefore, written accounts of colonial ventures were not only underwritten by transcontinental investment relations, but also became in many cases the only return investors ever received, as travel expeditions that resulted in losses were often reduced, literally, to words. The sensational economies of colonial texts sometimes measure out, and even redress, this balance of loss and expectation.

Cabeza de Vaca's *Relación*, for example, must explain the series of tremendous losses that beset the Pánfilo de Narváez expedition, which began with five ships and 500 men, and ended with no ships and four men who, when they finally arrived in Mexico City ten years later, could not be recognized as Spaniards. The narrative itself is prefaced by an apologetic "Proem" addressed to Charles V, which explains that

> since my counsel and my diligence were of little avail in accomplishing the task for which we went in the service of Your Majesty, and since God permitted, because of our sins, that of all the expeditions that ever went to those lands, no other encountered such great dangers or had such a miserable and disastrous outcome, I can render only this service: to bring to Your Majesty an account of what I learned and saw in the ten years that I wandered lost and naked through many and very strange lands. (Cabeza de Vaca 1993: 28)

Cabeza de Vaca, who significantly accompanied the expedition as a treasurer, can count up in return only an account of his own experiences, "the only thing that a man who returned naked could bring back" (ibid: 29). His opening appeal to the emperor

therefore positions the ensuing narrative of his remarkable adventures as a kind of literary and epistemic compensation for that failure, much in the way that Columbus' descriptions of New World beauty or New World marvels have sometimes been read as a textual abundance obscuring the lack of abundant gold.

When the Englishman Walter Ralegh, imagining himself a conquistador, went to Guiana in search of gold and silver mines that would increase the English kingdom's store of wealth, he was backed by money from his own and fellow aristocrats' pockets. His 1596 *Discovery of the Large, Rich, and Beautiful Empire of Guiana* begins, however, by admitting to two investing noblemen that he has thus far "only returned promises; and nowe for answere of both your adventures, I have sent you a bundle of papers," confessing that "the great debt which I have no power to pay, I can doe no more for a time but confesse to be due" (Ralegh 1848: iii). By the seventeenth century, however, the English, like the French, were increasingly replacing plans for conquest with plans to erect trading posts or plantations – at Sagedehoc in Maine, and Plymouth, Wessagusset, and Boston in Massachusetts – that would support American colonists and English investors alike through fish and fur trade profits.

John Smith was one of the early proponents of this shift from conquest and mines to commerce and fish, and as he turned his attention from Virginia to New England, he looked to the Netherlands as his economic model. Smith assures readers of his *New Englands Trials* of a profitable traffic in fish that "will afford as good golde as the mines of Guiana, or Tumbatu [*sic*], with lesse hazard and charge, and more certaintie," enabling "our [English] profites" to "equalize theirs [the Dutch]" (Smith 1986: 406, 398). His tracts appeal to the national as well as personal pecuniary interests of his audience, hoping that the "Honour" of "the Gentry" and "the hope and assurance of wealth" for "all" will inspire English people to serve "our God, our King, our Country, and our selves" rather than "the Portugall, Spaniard, Dutch, French, or Turke" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 204). Dutch New World writing, often addressed to patroons who had been granted by the Dutch West India Company large estates in New Netherland in exchange for bringing over settlers, was similarly mindful of its audience's personal and national investments. The dedicatory poem appended by the publisher to the opening of Adriaen Van Der Donck's *Description of the New Netherlands* makes a reinvestment appeal, asking its Dutch readers to no longer "mourn about Brazil, full of base Portugese" but instead to turn their attention to New Netherland where "their loss" might now "bring gain" (Van Der Donck 1968: x).

Vocabularies of God and Gold

Readers of New World narratives were, of course, interested in other kinds of returns, too: in prospects for converting New World natives to Christianity, in marvelous stories about cannibals, or one-legged or two-headed creatures, in proto-ethnographic descriptions of the New World natives, and in extraordinary accounts like Smith's

rescue by Pocahontas or Cabeza de Vaca's healing of Indians. Yet of these many reading rewards, it has been the accounting element of early colonial texts – their function as a sort of transcontinental financial portfolio – that has perhaps been most underplayed by literary histories, literary anthologies, and literary analyses. The investment dynamic that structured the production and reception of colonial texts becomes more difficult to overlook, however, once colonial American writing is situated within a comparative and circum-atlantic framework.

T. H. Breen (1986) has suggested that subordinating economics within American literary studies has allowed literary histories to tell stories that center around appealing nationalist tropes of freedom and individualism, rather than greed and exploitation. Breen and Foster have in turn urged a rejection of the "ferocious debate over the primacy of economic as against religious" motives for colonial migration, wisely insisting that the "traditional either/or dichotomy – *either* religion *or* economics – makes no sense" (Breen and Foster 1980: 53). Of course, as a growing number of cultural and literary analyses remark, religious and economic discourses were largely inextricable from each other in the early modern era. David Murray (1997) illustrates, for example, how Roger Williams' concerns with commercial exchange, religious conversion, and linguistic translation inform and support each other in *A Key into the Language of America*, a book which encourages translingualism as a tool for both missionary and trading efforts. Stephen Greenblatt similarly maintains that Columbus' Christian imperialism rhetorically "bring[s] together commodity conversion and spiritual conversion" (Greenblatt 1991: 71). As Patricia Seed remarks, for most Iberians, religious and economic aims in the New World were "fundamentally compatible. Pursuing gold and God at the same time appeared entirely reasonable," particularly since the Spanish and Portuguese shared the assumption that gold was deposited in the earth by God for the use of his followers (Seed 2001: 69).

Although she suggests that the opposite was true for the English, who appeared unable to reconcile material with spiritual success, recent work by Mark Peterson and others indicates otherwise. Peterson challenges the dominant scholarly assumption that in New England "piety and prosperity were enemies" whose battle concluded with the triumph of commerce over faith, arguing instead that commerce and merchants were beneficial rather than harmful to Puritanism's expansion in New England (Peterson 1997: 4, 19). Certainly, the Puritans had a deeply ambivalent relationship to wealth and worldly success, but the language of colonial New World writing, from Massachusetts to Brazil, gives evidence of a sustained mutuality between religious and economic discourses. John Winthrop's "A Model of Christian Charity," for example, traffics in the language both of Christianity and the English corporation when he describes the settlers departing for Massachusetts as a single "body" "knitt" together by "ligamentes" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 245) – a body held together by Christian love, but just as much by the "perpetuall fellowship and communaltie" that, in the words of joint-stock companies, made them "one bodie" (quoted in Scott 1968 I: 19). Roger Williams, too, famously turns to the language of global commerce when, in *The Bloudy Tenent*, he compares the church to "a

Corporation, Society, or Company of *East-Indie* or *Turkie-Merchants*" that must be kept separate from the state (Williams 1963: 73). Matheus Nogueira, the blacksmith figure in Manuel da Nóbrega's *Dialogue for Conversion of the Indians*, meanwhile, significantly likens the task of converting natives to "harvesting brazil-wood" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 88), aligning potential religious converts with Brazil's primary commodity for export.

Colonial Economies and the World-System

The ideology of mercantilism governed the economic strategies and practices of early modern European states. As Immanuel Wallerstein explains, seventeenth-century mercantilism "involved state policies of economic nationalism and revolved around a concern with the circulation of commodities, whether in terms of the movement of bullion or in the creation of balances of trade" (Wallerstein 1974: 37). Within mercantilist ideology, nations competed with each other for the largest portion of the world's wealth, and colonies or overseas kingdoms became essential as external sources of bullion, raw materials, or markets that could enhance the economic, political, and military strength of the metropolitan center, which invariably sought to balance favorably its credits and debits. Ralph Bauer suggestively argues that this mercantilist logic may well have organized the literary production of knowledge in the early Atlantic world as well. Raw materials – like sugar or timber, but also writings characterized by "raw" data, such as ethnographic details and "objective" travel observations – flowed east from the colonial periphery to the imperial center, whereas refined products – like clothing or cookware, but also historical, philosophical, or self-consciously "literary" writing – flowed west. The result was the "uneven" development of literary forms that colonial writers sometimes resisted, but that has nevertheless left colonial American writing historically subordinated and aesthetically undervalued in relation to its European counterparts (Bauer 2003: 4).

Bauer's analysis evokes Latin American underdevelopment theory and world-systems theory, which share an interest in capitalism's transnational contours, and which have both been extensively debated and critiqued as ways of understanding the early modern economy and the role of the Americas in it. Andre Gunder Frank's "dependency theory" attributed the economic underdevelopment of Latin America to its colonial history of peripheral subordination to the metropolitan economy in Europe. But Frank's analysis has long since been rejected by many for undervaluing the agency of colonial actors, and for misidentifying the colonial economy as capitalist from the very beginning (see Laclau 1971). The much broader world-systems theory associated with Immanuel Wallerstein situates the emergence of capitalism in the context not of the nation and its boundaries but of the modern world-system, which emerges in the wake of the European discovery of the Americas, and consolidates over the course of the seventeenth century. While there are multiple cultures and political forms within this world-system, labor is divided between strong European core-states and their

underdeveloped peripheries, and the system's overall stability depends on the fundamental inequality between these regions. Like Frank, Wallerstein has been challenged for undervaluing class struggle and the periphery's potential power, for muddling the distinctions between mercantilism and capitalism, and for displacing the nation as the central unit for understanding capitalist development (see Bushnell and Greene 2002; Stern 1988; Brenner 1977; Denemark and Thomas 1988).

Transition to capitalism debates, of course, have haunted the reception of both Frank's and Wallerstein's theories. Dominant historical consensus locates the emergence of the first modern capitalist society in seventeenth-century England, but scholars continue to disagree over when and to what extent colonial American economies can be described as capitalist, and even whether there is such a thing as a colonial economy. As John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard remark in the case of what would become the US, "the concept of a colonial economy is anachronistic, the use of which goes unquestioned largely because of the postcolonial development of the United States" (McCusker and Menard 1985: 8). Their comments suggest that narratives of American economic history have shared some of the same problems as narratives of American literary history, both of which have traditionally depended on teleological nationalist frameworks. Even so fine and recent a work of economic history as Margaret Newell's *From Dependence to Independence* (1998) relies, as its title suggests, on a progressive narrative in which the colonial period is asked to serve as anachronistic "handmaiden" to a nation that did not yet exist – a fate that, as literary critics have argued, has for long beset colonial American literary materials as well.

Although the world-systems approach of Wallerstein, Frank, and others has historically had a far greater influence in Latin American studies than it has in North American studies, even there much of its appeal has been due to its ability to explain retroactively the continuing underdevelopment of current South American *nations*. But a world-systems model may be of most value in disabling rather than reinforcing the nation as the central category of economic (or, indeed, literary) analysis. Although he has been criticized for incorrectly associating capitalism with circulation rather than production, Wallerstein also carefully distinguishes between a world market (which presumes the participation of all regions in a single capitalist market) and a world-system (which does not presume that the capitalist market operates in all regions that nevertheless enable the capitalist world-system to function) (Wallerstein 1988: 879). The American colonies were critical to the modern world-system not because they were themselves capitalist, but because they made the emergence of capitalism possible: "The Americas as a geosocial construct were born in the long sixteenth century. The creation of this geosocial entity, the Americas, was the constitutive act of the modern world-system. The Americas were not incorporated into an already existing capitalist world-economy. There could not have been a capitalist world-economy without the Americas" (Quijano and Wallerstein 1992: 549). Allen Kulikoff offers a somewhat narrower formulation of colonial America's split, non/capitalist economic identity when he observes that, although the British

North American colonies were "noncapitalist," they were also "born in a capitalist Atlantic economy" (Kulikoff 1992: 7).

Colonial American writing was also, of course, born within this emerging world-system and its transcontinental networks of investment and commerce. Walter Mignolo – who adapts and renames Wallerstein's model the modern/colonial world system, to better recognize the central role of colonialism in the emergence of modernity – points toward an alternative conception of colonial American space when he discards a nationalist site of "grounding" for one imagined instead as a "crossing" (Mignolo 2000: 69). The virtue of such a geoeconomic model for American literary history is its incentive to trade in a national and temporal narrative for a more transnational and spatial one, in which the colonial Americas become not the precursor to nations or economic formations that would arrive only later, but criss-crossed sites engaged in uneven negotiations with European core-states, and marked also by their own unequally developed colonial centers and colonial peripheries. As A. J. R. Russell-Wood explains, the concepts of center and periphery are "parallax – the apparent change in the position of what constitutes *center* and what *periphery* resulting from a change in the viewer's position – be this in spatial or chronological terms, or even of social or financial circumstances" (Russell-Wood 2002: 106). Such a framework may change the terms not only of literary historical narratives but also of particular colonial texts. Guaman Poma's *Letter to a King*, for example, might be read as a literary effort to reposition the Inca from their "peripheral" cultural and economic status in the worldview of the Spanish to a newly imagined center, and Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* might be recognized as the history of an under-developed town that becomes increasingly peripheral to the growing colonial center of Boston.

Economies of Form and Style

If the earliest writing about the New World asks for and justifies the extension of European credit to various American colonial projects, the rhetorical success of those requests depended on the ability of writers to convey the credibility of themselves and their texts. The profound geographical and cultural distances between Europe and the Americas, combined with the increasing association of self-interest and deceit with the merchant adventurers who traveled those distances, posed significant problems for the production of such credibility. As the economic objectives of transatlantic travel changed, and as the character and interests of investors changed, the characteristics of colonial writing often changed as well. Language bore the burden of having to transport the especially fragile commodity of truth across expanses that were themselves sometimes unbelievable, and prose styles and forms developed to negotiate these challenges.

Regardless of the economic goals or systems that underpinned them, protestations of truth were nearly always accompanied by professions of linguistic restraint.

Pêro Vaz de Caminha assures the Portuguese king, Manuel I, that "I shall neither prettify nor distort nor add anything to what I saw and to what appeared to me" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 33), and Cabeza de Vaca announces that his tale is "without a doubt . . . very true, for I am brief rather than long-winded in everything" (Cabeza de Vaca 1993: 29). But such compressions in the service of truth often collapse under the weight of New World excess. Bernal Díaz, for example, abruptly interrupts his own extensively detailed description of the extraordinary marketplace in Tenochtitlan by remarking, "why waste so many words in recounting what they sell in their great market? If I describe everything in detail I shall never be finished" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 48), before continuing to describe yet more commodities for sale, apparently unable linguistically to compress Mexico's material excess. Bernal Díaz's mesmerized apprehension of this commercial abundance is consistent with his later description of the vast quantities of gold possessed and distributed by Montezuma, as a drug that threatens to turn the Spanish conquistadors into "senseless beasts dazzled by the gold and incapable of looking death in the face" (ibid: 53). The soldiers must convince themselves to ward off the hypnotic and unmanly effects of this drug by taking up arms against Montezuma, an act that will of course violently secure their own possession of the dazzling narcotic, while also repeating the gothic horror they locate within the blood-stained temples or cues, whose tops they can see from the marketplace.

In his influential *Marvelous Possessions* (1991) Stephen Greenblatt nominates wonder as the central attribute of early European writing about the Americas. But while consuming readers might have enjoyed the accumulation and excess of Renaissance wonder, investing readers quickly became skeptical of it, and colonial writers increasingly traded in the abundance of wonder for the compactness of plainness, which emerged over the seventeenth century as the new linguistic guarantee of an "objective" truth. Of course, it is worth considering the ways in which wonder and plainness (and their categorical heirs, fiction and science) both may have linguistically displaced another colonial sensation – the experience of horror – which often erupts in the (broken) silences of colonial writing, from Diego de Landa's account of the Mayas, to William Bradford's description of the Pequot massacre, to Isaac Jogues' narrative of Iroquois captivity. In his account, in *La Florida*, of the captivity of Juan Ortiz, for example, Garcilaso de la Vega remarks that Ortiz's captor never ceased to remember that the Spanish "had thrown his mother to the dogs and left her to be eaten by them, and when he went to blow his nose and could not find his nostrils, the devil possessed him to avenge himself on Juan Ortiz" (Vega 2000: 71). Such traumatic eruptions often complicate textual efforts to affectively balance colonial accounts of (dis)possession.

Anthony Pagden has remarked that if neither the French nor the English ever produced the kind of grand, epic histories of conquest and settlement like those by Bernal Díaz, Garcilaso de la Vega, or Antonio de Herrera, it was because "there was nothing which took place in French or British America about which such stories could be told" (Pagden 1995: 66). As Spanish-inspired hopes for gold and silver

extraction gave way to English, French, and Dutch mercantile commerce, representations of wonder gave way to a semiotic restraint and its sensation of delayed or withheld expectation – suggesting that the worlds of gold and conquest operated on a fundamentally different aesthetic than the worlds of credit and commerce. Richard Helgerson has argued that "commerce, like conquest, has its genres," and if conquest is identified most strongly with the epic poem, commerce is best represented by the commodity list (Helgerson 1992: 173). It is a long way from the incantation of Pérez de Villagrá – "I sing of arms and the heroic man" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 132) – to that of George Alsop – "Trafique is Earth's great Atlas" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 217), much less to Thomas Hariot's list of "Merchantable Commodities," which includes descriptions of "Grasse silke," "Worme silke," "Sassafras," "Cedar," "Furres," "Civet-cats," and "Woad [wood]" (Hariot 1997: 68–72), and that depict the New World as a place closer to a shopping warehouse than a military battlefield.

This seventeenth-century shift in dominant discourses of truth-telling occurred within social as well as geographic space, both of which were impacted by the economics of personal and national identity. The earlier aristocratic literary model of the editor Richard Hakluyt gives way, for example, to the later "mercantilist poetics and politics" of Samuel Purchas, and the bourgeois model of John Smith (Bauer 2003: 27–8). Although they are contemporaneous with each other, the "disinterested" *New Englands Prospect* by the Puritan William Wood and the "exaggerated" *New English Canaan* by the Anglican Thomas Morton occupy as different socioeconomic realms as they do stylistic ones (see Round 1999: 45, 44). In fact, Morton's pastoral evocations of a landscape of abundance and leisure are more reminiscent of the literary style of Ralegh or Columbus, and his economic ambitions of becoming a New World landlord are closer to theirs, too. In addition to suggesting that the pilgrims are incompetent economic managers of New England, Morton mocks their dry or "wooden" literary productions, and their inability to interpret correctly the densely allusive poetry he nailed to the famous maypole, that at once offended Puritan religious sensibilities and attracted Indians and their goods from Plymouth's trading post to his.

A transnational literary and economic history makes more room for, and may well be able to make better sense of, the idiosyncratic economic vision and literary style of a Thomas Morton (whose text is routinely judged unreadable) or a Sir Ferdinando Gorges (whose chapter in New England history goes routinely unread). In a challenge to the nation-centered bias of new historicist approaches to literature and culture, Roland Greene has urged the renewed study of literary modes such as the baroque, the picaresque, and the pastoral in their transnational context (Greene 1999: 26). Greene's own study of the lyric as a transnational literary form that described and managed Europe's unmet imperial desires, brings together the poetics and performance of unrequited conquest in Columbus, Pêro Vaz de Caminha, the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, and Sir Philip Sidney. While love is the most evocative sensation through which that unrequitedness gets expressed, Greene is also attentive to the equally unmet economic dimensions of such desire, aware that the political and aesthetic drama

played out in Petrarchism "has an economic logic, too: the unrequited lover and explorer is also a protocapitalist who seeks to extract value from his discoveries, while the object, whether poem or commodity, holds back whatever it can that is desired" (Greene 1999: 13). Timothy Sweet (2002) similarly brings economic (as well as environmental) concerns to bear on an all-but-forgotten colonial genre in his study of the early American georgic, a literary mode which celebrates humans' agricultural work on the landscape. Sweet's analysis of such colonial georgics as John Smith's *Generall Historie* and Robert Beverley's *History and Present State of Virginia* suggests how literary form engages with concerns central to the economics of New World colonialism, such as agriculture and land ownership, and provides material for comparing the economic logic of colonial English georgic to that of colonial Spanish epic.

Many comparative historical analyses of New World colonialism are organized around an opposition between the economic culture of North and South America. Claudio Véliz (1994), for example, associates colonial North America with a culture of experimentation and change that was conducive to capitalism, in contrast to a South American culture of traditionalism and stasis that promoted the holdover of medieval feudalism. As Véliz's analysis suggests, these cultural and economic differences register as well in the aesthetic domain, since they correspond to what he describes as the fundamentally "gothic" North American New World on the one hand, and a resolutely "baroque" New World of Spanish America on the other. Pagden (1995) somewhat differently characterizes the distinction between South and North America as one between Spanish patterns of conquest, and English ones of settlement – an observation that Patricia Seed (2001) significantly extends in her comparative contrast of the colonial English appropriation of Indian land to the colonial Spanish exploitation of Indian labor.

As Seed argues, these differing objects and strategies for a shared European "pursuit of riches" helped to determine dominant representations of native Americans in colonial writing. The Spanish, who sought to justify their exploitation of Indian bodies appropriated for mine labor, constructed the Indians as cannibals who appeared to lack access to humanity's fundamental trait of reason. The English, by contrast, justified their appropriation of Indian land by constructing (male) natives as hunters whose supposed lack of engagement in agricultural work prevented them from claiming ownership of unworked land. Seed's analysis provides a materialist framework within which to examine and compare, for example, representations of Native Americans, gender, and landscape in the captivity narratives of the Portuguese-identified Hans Staden and the Englishwoman Mary Rowlandson.

Labor, Leisure, and (Dis)Possession

Colonial writing could justify and celebrate, as well as indict and critique, the ideologies and practices that enabled the gain of individual as well as national wealth.

It frequently did both at once, as in Richard Ligon's simultaneously condemning and enticing descriptions of Barbadian excesses. Many, of course, arrived in the New World unwillingly, enslaved or indentured to labor, or even as the often reluctant wives or children of emigrating men. For others, the Americas promised not only profits but also "a kind of social advancement which, before the mid-eighteenth century, could be acquired by almost no other means" (Pagden 1995: 64). Spanish hidalgos, whom Pagden describes as "the impoverished members of the lesser fighting nobility" (Pagden 1987: 52), sought elevated social status through the *encomienda* system which gave them control over native labor, and which they received in exchange for their military service to the Crown (ibid: 54). Portuguese colonists, too, saw Brazil as a place to gain wealth and live without labor, "a place to rise within the traditional social order" (Schwartz 1987: 19) – although such mobility was only made possible by enslaving Native Americans and imported Africans. As many point out, the comparatively small number of French settlers were the colonial European exception in neither exploiting Indian labor nor expelling them from the land, but seeking in most cases to live alongside and integrate the natives into newly established trading networks (see Seed 2001; Paquet and Wallot 1987).

But attitudes toward land, labor, and wealth could also, of course, cut across national identity. Some of the earliest English colonial projects in North America, such as Edward Maria Wingfield's Virginia or the northern New England of Sir Ferdinando Gorges, were imagined as opportunities for Englishmen to become leisured colonial landholders in the model of the English countryside. English Puritan settlers, on the other hand, demonstrated a far greater ambivalence toward material accumulation, whether of money or land. Cotton Mather and Roger Williams alike worried that land would become a kind of God to English people, as gold had for the Spanish. Although Puritans' religious anxiety often did compel them to work hard, as Max Weber famously argued, they did not work hard in order to gain or prove their election, as Stephen Innes observes when he remarks that "the impossibility of achieving salvation through good works was close to the main point of Puritan theology" (Innes 1995: 129). Simon Schama makes the same case in regard to Calvinist Dutch culture during the seventeenth century, when wealth, he observes, "far from being the reassuring symptom of a predestined Elect, as Weber argued, acted on contemporary consciences as a moral agitator. Without it, the Republic would collapse; with it, the Dutch could fall prey to false gods, Mammon and Baal, and engineer their own downfall" (Schama 1987: 124). Such ambivalence toward wealth and accumulation are in marked contrast, of course, to the anti-work ethic that emerged in the Southern and West Indian English colonies among the hereditary landowning class (Innes 1995: 187).

The European arrival altered forever also the indigenous economy, which was itself already interregional. Walter Mignolo incorporates into the many transnational commercial circuits of the early modern world two indigenous American trade networks, one centered in Anahuac (in what is now Mexico) and the other centered in Tawantinsuyu (in what is now Peru), which became linked into Europe's central

Mediterranean trade circuit (Mignolo 2000: 26–7). Early Native American texts occasionally give evidence of these indigenous economies, even if it is primarily to record the violent shattering of their marketplaces and their systems of value. The Tlateloloco authors who described Cortés' conquest, for example, remark that it turned the people into nearly valueless exchangeable goods, inverting native understandings of worth: "They set a price on all of us: on the young men, the priests, the boys and girls. The price of a poor man was only two handfuls of corn, or ten cakes made from mosses or twenty cakes of salty couch-grass. Gold, jade, rich cloths, quetzal feathers – everything that once was precious was now considered worthless." In the marketplace stall where once incense was sold, the Spaniards erected a cannon (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 69).

Details about indigenous systems of economic exchange are also frequently embedded in European New World writing, and such practices often became cental to European New World trading practices. Bernal Díaz remarks that merchants in Tenochtitlan place gold "in the thin quills of the large geese of that country," and "according to the length and thickness of these little quills, they used to reckon their accounts with one another, how much so many gourds of chocolate or so many slaves or mantles were worth" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 49). Adriaen Van Der Donck reports on the surprising lack of "miserly desire for the costly metals among the natives" of New Netherlands, for "the use of gold and silver or any metallic coin is unknown among them." Instead, as Van Der Donck explains, they use wampum or shells assembled on strings as their currency, "the only article of moneyed medium among the natives, with which any traffic can be driven." Because the North American colonies exported nearly all their coin or bullion to their European centers, wampum (along with corn and tobacco) became of profound importance to the Dutch, the French, and the English in North America, who used it "in purchasing necessaries and carrying on our trade" for furs (Van Der Donck 1968: 93). The captivity narratives of Cabeza de Vaca, Hans Staden, Isaac Jogues, and Mary Rowlandson similarly provide largely inadvertent details about native economic practice, both in their micronarratives of goods exchanged, and in their macronarratives of possessing and trading captives themselves as a kind of transcultural commodity.

Economics, in dialogue with other discourses, powerfully shapes and is shaped by the rhetoric, vocabulary, style, form, and histories of colonial American literature. Although economics has traditionally been displaced more often than it has been engaged in the dominant stories about American literatures, the transnational and multilingual framework evident in the newest colonial literary anthologies encourages greater attention to the material economic relations, motives, and effects that underpin and penetrate colonial American writing. Colonial writings frequently encode the transcontinental relations of mercantile investment and return, the negotiations of local and long-distance trade, and the numerical and affective bookkeeping logics that organized and underwrote the production and reception of texts. By registering the textual materiality of colonial writing, we might widen our sense of the economic, and integrate the economies of literary aesthetics with the economic

contexts that sustained colonial American writing and the transnational book trade. Early in the seventeenth century, John Smith pragmatically announced in *A Description of New England* that "I am not so simple to thinke that ever any other motive then wealth will ever erect there a common wealth" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 204). Later that same century, the narrator of Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora's *The Misadventures of Alonso Ramírez* rather more ambiguously declared that "My longing for wealth stumbled over all of this" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 142). A colonial literary economics might identify the linguistic dynamics of promise and profit, as well as calculate their more silent, stumbled-over remainders.

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5
The Culture of Colonial America: Theology and Aesthetics

Paul Giles

Even leaving aside all the complexities of the pre-Columbian world, the period between the settlement of Jamestown at the beginning of the seventeenth century and the emergence of the United States into political independence in the 1780s encompasses a temporal expanse of some 180 years, roughly the same amount of time as the period between the Constitutional Convention of 1787 and the inauguration of President John F. Kennedy in 1960. Not surprisingly, then, the literature and culture of "colonial America" is a vast and multifaceted phenomenon, although its heterogeneous qualities have often been undervalued by subsequent narratives seeking to justify the exceptional qualities of American national identity. One issue indicated by this homogenizing impulse is the historical tendency to conflate American culture with culture of the United States, to regard the political fissure of the 1780s as either inevitable or providential, and so to look back through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the hope of identifying figures who might be said to anticipate American mythic tropes of iconoclastic independence, pastoral westering, or millennial idealism. Thus, for Sacvan Bercovitch in 1975 it was the "Puritan myth . . . that every individual reconstitute himself by grace" which "encouraged [Jonathan] Edwards to equate conversion, national commerce, and the treasures of a renovated earth, [Benjamin] Franklin to record his rise to wealth as a moral vindication of the new nation, [James Fenimore] Cooper to submerge the historical dramas of the frontier in the heroics of American nature, [Henry David] Thoreau to declare self-reliance an economic model of 'the only true America,' " and so on (Bercovitch 1975: 185). By reading the development of American culture typologically, Bercovitch, like Perry Miller before him, was in effect reading it retrospectively, annexing the prehistory of the nation in order to adduce teleological continuities between past and present.

Sharp criticism of this "continuities" school, whereby Edward Taylor appears as an avatar of Emily Dickinson or Franklin is said to anticipate Horatio Alger, has emerged more recently from scholars such as William C. Spengemann and R. C. De Prospo,

who have argued, particularly in De Prospo's case, that such grand national narratives have an implicitly imperial sweep to them, a trajectory which tends to occlude diverse forces of resistance and difference. Philip F. Gura has also written about the need to restore historical specificity to the study of American literature and culture before 1780, to emphasize regional variations and political cross-currents rather than simply regarding the emergence of liberty as somehow predestined. In fact, as John M. Murrin has argued, the history of liberty in early America is probably something that has been overstudied, too much celebrated and endorsed without sufficient consideration of the ambiguities always attendant upon its incarnation within particular historical circumstances (Murrin 1984: 152). Murrin points out how the American nation emerged on the scene in the late eighteenth century in "an unexpected, impromptu fashion"; in the 1760s Americans saw themselves simply as seeking the common rights of Englishmen, but the political events of the following twenty years hurtled them rapidly into a condition of full independence (Murrin 1987:344). This in turn suggests how native understandings of the status of colonial culture in the early national period would have been transformed inexorably by what happened during the 1780s, when, as Kenneth Silverman has observed, there was a relentless invocation of the word "American" in all kinds of public contexts (Silverman 1976: 493).

David S. Shields has pointed out how the term "America" first came into general use through transatlantic dialogues in the first decade of the eighteenth century, when the notion of America possessing a commercial character distinct from that of Europe was first put forward (Shields 2000a: 436). The conception of America being formed through a dialectical process is, then, not a new phenomenon, but it gathers particular momentum at the end of the century; according to J. C. D. Clark, the idea of American cultural identity in the early modern period was centered not around nationalism as such but around specific codes of law and religion, with a prior Americanism being ascribed only after 1787 (Clark 1994: 47, 60). We see this kind of retrospective mythologization taking shape in Royall Tyler's play *The Contrast*, first performed in New York in 1787, which sets up an antithesis between European cynicism and vanity on the one hand and "Yankee" frugality and moral seriousness on the other. Although this antithesis had little basis in the world of eighteenth-century culture, it became an increasingly popular framework through which the new United States chose to reinterpret its past, as part of a general consolidation of national identity in the nineteenth-century era of Romanticism. As late as 1957, Benjamin T. Spencer was adhering to the terms of Tyler's dialectic when he equated "the quest for nationality" in American literature with "a concern for literary integrity – for delivering American writers from the sterile obligation to express what their own experience had not nurtured and what their own society did not require" (Spencer 1957: ix).

Spencer was, of course, still working with assumptions drawn from Romanticism counterpointing the "integrity" of indigenous culture to inauthentic, imported modes of artifice. This is the same nationalist emphasis promoted by mid-twentieth-century

historians such as Daniel Boorstin, for whom the whole notion of an "Enlightenment" was a foreign concept bearing little relevance to the more pragmatic temper of American experience. Such an approach has by now been generally discredited, partly because of the shift towards considering the culture of colonial America more as a transnational phenomenon, partly because of a broader demystification of the binary opposition between public and private spheres recycled by critics of Spencer's generation. As Jay Fliegelman and others have shown more recently, the imposition of such an opposition on eighteenth-century culture is anachronistic, since the rhetoric of performance and political engagement in the second half of the eighteenth century traversed the line between private and public, with the Declaration of Independence furnishing just one example of how processes of reasoning were intertwined intellectually with affective intuition. Conviction in this age of sensibility became a matter of the heart as much as of the mind, with "public speaking" consequently being "reconceptualized as an occasion for the public revelation of a private self" (Fliegelman 1993: 24). In declaring independence, that is to say, Jefferson was theatricalizing on the public stage a certain politicized version of the private sphere, predicated upon the right to "life, liberty, & the pursuit of happiness" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 525), rather than simply advocating a pastoral withdrawal from the social arena into a more rarefied realm of abstract individualism. For Jefferson, as for other eighteenth-century Americans, the idea of "liberty" did not mean simply negative freedom, the freedom to ignore social restraints; instead, it implied a protection of political and civil liberties and the right to individual autonomy within a complex legislative framework mandated by the state.

All this means, however, that students of American "culture" before 1780 are left with something of a dilemma. If we acknowledge that the institutionalization of aesthetics as a separate and transcendent realm – as in the philosophical models of Samuel Taylor Coleridge or Ralph Waldo Emerson – postdates colonial America, then how do we read the enormous range of material that was published in the years before political independence? Not infrequently, the eighteenth century in particular has been more or less ignored by literary historians, since the more rationalistic, skeptical tenor of writers like Franklin and Thomas Jefferson has appeared uncongenial to the spirit of Romanticism which is too often equated with American cultural destiny. Emblematic of this is the way Franklin's *Autobiography* has been overrepresented in literary anthologies, since its tone of individualism and self-reliance can be made readily to accord with an Emersonian dynamic, whereas Franklin's dark, vituperative satires of the 1770s have remained relatively underread. "Rules by Which a Great Empire May Be Reduced to a Small One" (1773) highlights what Franklin took to be the increasingly farcical nature of Anglo-American relations in the years leading up to the Revolution, and it is the equal of anything by Jonathan Swift in its capacity to unsettle conventional assumptions by pushing them to a logical extreme. Franklin here solemnly lays down guidelines for the incitement of insurrection and the consequent loss of imperial territory, recasting political stupidity within a studious form of textbook rationalism and so implying, through paradoxical inversion, the

deeply irrational nature of British actions. As Giles Gunn has remarked, however, such an embittered emphasis on rupture and division has tended not to sit well with the liberal idealism of American critics such as V. L. Parrington or F. O. Matthiessen, who believed their native literature should be above all an expression of optimism and deliverance (Gunn 1992: 131). In this sense, the literature of colonial America marks not only a temporal break but also a philosophical disjunction, a fracturing of the utopian circumference of post-Revolutionary America.

The larger significance of such disjunctions has been highlighted recently by the sheer volume of material being recovered from seventeenth and eighteenth-century America. There has been in early American studies recently what Shields (2001) has called an "archival turn," a greater curiosity about the wealth of writing from this period which still remains to be properly examined by cultural historians and literary critics. Writing in 2000, Shields remarked how little attention, critical or otherwise, has been paid to primary sources from pre-Revolutionary America: "The literary history of Louisiana remains to be written . . . Given the wealth of manuscripts lying unexamined in the family papers section of the New York Archives and the important cultural contribution of the Dutch to American culture (sanitation, companionate marriage, public debt), the absence of any collection of Dutch colonial literary texts since the Civil War is a scandal" (Shields 2000b: 638). With its wide coverage of authors from different areas of the American continent and its emphasis on works in languages other than English, *The Literatures of Colonial America* (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001) can be seen as part of this ongoing project of recuperation, the replenishment of early American studies as a rich, varied, and regionally diverse field. But such recognition depends, of course, on a willingness to read different kinds of texts without any implicit preconceptions about how they might fit into a larger national narrative, an allowance of negative capability running counter to the retrospective forms of historical appropriation that tended to hold sway in the second half of the twentieth century.

Such appropriations were attributable not simply to academic myopia, but were part of the American national consciousness more generally. John Berryman, for example, hailed Anne Bradstreet in his 1953 poem "Homage to Mistress Bradstreet" as the first American confessional poet and thus, by extension, an honorary ancestor of himself, while Adrienne Rich in a 1966 essay celebrated Bradstreet as the first American woman writer to create her own alternative poetic space in opposition to a male-dominated public sphere. In fact, though, Bradstreet's work is not organized around a simple dialectic between the psychological integrity of the self and refuge in what Rich dismissed as a formulaic world of "rhymed couplets" betokening a hopeless "nostalgia for English culture" (Rich 1980: 27). Instead, Bradstreet evokes both of these intellectual landscapes simultaneously, so that her typically double-edged, metaphysical enterprise can hardly be understood except in terms of, as she herself puts it in the title of one of her poems, a "Dialogue Between Old England and New." Granted that history is always in one way or another a form of misprision, it still seems curious that both Berryman and Rich should have chosen to marginalize

Bradstreet's transatlantic provenance in their eagerness to install her as a founding father of American poetry. Having grown up in the household of the Earl of Lincoln, surrounded by all the paraphernalia of an English Renaissance court, Bradstreet creates in her early verse an elaborate style of ritual and artifice indebted to the French poet Guillaume du Bartas, a style which her later elegies rigorously and reflexively deconstruct. The point is simply that there is always in Bradstreet an implicit (and sometimes explicit) dialogue between pagan culture and biblical revelation, between classical authority and emotional experience, and that to privilege a reading of Bradstreet from a specifically American cultural perspective is to allegorize her prematurely as a harbinger of national identity.

The notion of dialogue or transposition, indeed, is crucial to the culture of colonial America at many different levels. The preface to the *Bay Psalm Book* (1640), the first book to be printed in the colonies, worries away at a perceived discrepancy between the "proper sense of David's words in the Hebrew verses" and their refurbishment according to the conventions of "poetical licence," designating the former a "text" and the latter a form of "translation." Translation always involves a carrying over, a displacement from one order of discourse to another, and it is this conception of an interaction between different spheres that effectively structures the languages of colonial America. Interactions between Anglos and Indians comprise another aspect of this dialogue, with many American writers of this period involved in what William Boelhower, referring to John Smith, has called "the intersection or superimposition of different space-scopes" (Boelhower 2003: 669). Just as Smith held up Pocahontas as an idealized fantasy figure in which he recognized an alternative version of himself, so other intellectuals requisitioned Indian culture to further their own ideological ends: John Eliot in 1663 completed his translation of the Bible into an Algonquian language, while Benjamin Franklin, in "Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America" (1784), coolly draws an analogy between Native American rules of debate and established procedures of the British House of Commons. Even Christian ministers ostensibly antagonistic to what they saw as the Indians' diabolical tendencies tended at times to be caught up within a Native American cultural matrix: Cotton Mather, for example, records in one of his sermons how "A Spirit . . . with a wondrous Lustre, made his descent into my Study," an experience that mirrors the Indian tribal customs of "crossing between the mundane and spiritual planes" (Kupperman 2000: 128). The issue here is not one of "influence" in any straightforward sense, but, rather, of ways in which the development of American culture was shaped partially by exposure to and misrecognition of these parallel worlds of Indian ritual. In his *A Key to the Language of America* (1643), Roger Williams, one of the first to grapple with this problem, writes of how his Indian friend Wequash speaks with him in "broken English" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 270), a phrase which might be said to epitomize the sense of linguistic traversal and cultural hybridity that permeated colonial America more generally.

The twentieth-century national narrative of American history which emphasized essential continuities between covenant theology and the revolutionary politics of

the early national period has, then, been widely superseded by a recognition of the multifaceted quality of American life before 1776. Rather than simply considering Jonathan Edwards as a bridge between the sinful consciousness of Puritanism and the exalted world of the Transcendentalists, as Perry Miller used to do (Miller 1967: 283), we might understand his writing as a cross between Native American culture and the musical accomplishments of his equally complex Calvinist contemporary J. S. Bach. The transatlantic dimensions to Edwards' reading and writing have been well documented: he studied the works of Isaac Newton in 1717 at Yale, where he also first encountered the philosophy of John Locke, and one of Edwards' achievements is to marry Locke's emphasis on empirically verifiable sensations with the theological apparatus of Calvinism, so that phenomena within the natural world appear to be, as he puts it, "images or shadows of divine things." But there is also in Edwards a striking use of images connected to caprice, fortune, and chance, all of which denote a swerve away from strict Calvinist notions of predestination (Pahl 1992: 94–7). What is most remarkable about Edwards' writing, then, is not its rationalism *per se* but its internalization of a state of contradiction, its attempt to bring together reason and faith, light and darkness, and its consequent oxymoronic attribution to God of "a majestic meekness; an awful sweetness" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 416). This leads Edwards towards a rhetoric of excess, where language always appears on the verge of breaking through its own syntactical conventions "like an infinite deluge, or infinite mountains over my head." His treatises yoke together by violence terrestrial and spiritual designs – "heaping infinite upon infinite, and multiplying infinite by infinite" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 419) – and his sermons notoriously terrified his congregations in the Connecticut River Valley by their extraordinary capacity to incarnate metaphysical conceits in fleshly terms:

> The God that hold you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked.
>
> . . . And it would be a wonder, if some that are now present should not be in hell in a very short time, even before this year is out. And it would be no wonder if some persons, that now sit here, in some seats of this meetinghouse, in health, quiet and secure, should be there before tomorrow morning. (Edwards 1966:159)

Norman Fiering (1981: 233) has suggested this dark, cruel aspect of Edwards' vision owes more to Thomas Hobbes than to Locke, which is certainly quite possible; but the more crucial thing to emphasize is the mixed quality of Edwards' discourse, its assimilation of influences from a variety of sources, and its skill in ratcheting up language to elicit a wide range of emotional effects. Consequently, it is less important to allegorize Edwards – to see him as an exponent of Lockean liberalism or as an avatar of Emersonian transcendentalism – than to attend to the idiosyncratic brilliance of Edwards' rhetoric itself. This is not to relapse into a purely aestheticized or dehistoricized account of Edwards' literary style; it is, though, to suggest that while

theology and philosophy form the cultural infrastructure of Edwards' work, that work cannot be explicated in theological or philosophical terms alone.

Karl Keller has talked of an "aesthetic of outrageousness" in American writing of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and certainly many New England writers of this period delight in the representation of various forms of incongruity and distortion, in the violent rupture of conventional social and literary practices. Edward Taylor's poetic meditations are mediated by bizarre images of "Gods Tender Bowells," of the universe as a "Bowling Alley" (Taylor 1960: 18, 387), thereby emphasizing the severe disjunction between worldly forms of representation and a divine power which must remain ultimately invisible and inscrutable. Similar innovations in aesthetic form manifest themselves in the voluminous writings of Cotton Mather, who has been fatally tarnished for later generations by his involvement in the Salem witchcraft trials of the 1690s, even though he was in fact not an authoritarian pedant but a learned and civilized scholar, proud of his scientific achievements and his fellowship of the Royal Society. Mather's ornate literary idiom involves a deliberate attempt to modernize the language of theology, to endow it with a power of animation through elaborate styles of wordplay in an attempt to mirror what he took to be the latent presence of divinity within the material world. For example, in *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702), his account of the first generation of Puritan settlers, Mather observes how "although Yorkshire be one of the largest shires in England; yet for all the *fires* of martyrdom which were kindled in the days of Queen Mary, it afforded no more *fuel* than one poor Leaf; namely, John Leaf, an apprentice, who suffered for the doctrine of the Reformation at the same time and stake with the famous John Bradford." After punning on "Leaf" in this way – wordplay underlined by the author's own italicized emphases, as if he were flamboyantly orchestrating his own textual responses – Mather continues his metaphorical conceit of coldness and warmth by describing the "*cold* country" of England as "too *hot*" for the reformers, inducing them to seek exile (Mather 1853: 108). It is an ingenious, one might almost say twisted, use of language which takes delight in displacing grammar out of its conventional categories so as to elucidate what Mather took to be the latent metaphysical dimension of both word and world.

Eighteenth-century American culture, then, cannot be characterized purely in terms of a binary opposition between a neoclassical gentility inflected by Anglophile traditions and an anti-formalist mode of Christian sermonizing. Making the case for the growth of a specifically American sensibility, Alan Heimert claimed that the sermon entitled "The Dangers of an Unconverted Ministry" preached by Gilbert Tennent, a spokesman for the "New Side" Presbyterians, on March 8, 1740 was "probably the most influential utterance of the entire eighteenth century." Tennent attacked learning without piety as he lambasted the Scotch-trained Presbyterian ministry for its culpable greed and what he called its "moral formalism," and he postulated instead an idea of spiritual warmth and oratorical prowess that was seen by Heimert as a direct antecedent of the tone of Emerson, Whitman, and other writers of the American Renaissance a hundred years later, in the 1850s (Heimert 1988: 119). But even the "Great Awakening," in which Tennent was a leading figure, was a

transnational rather than a purely American phenomenon, inspired partly as it was by Oxford graduate George Whitefield, who made the first of his seven visits to America in 1738, and by his fellow Englishman, George Fox. Ian K. Steele has described the Quaker Atlantic communities in 1740 as "a religious, political, and economic fraternity that demonstrated a level of communication between migrants and their English brethren that had been quite impossible for migrating dissenters half a century earlier," and in this sense the Quaker religion was no less of a transatlantic phenomenon at this time than science: there were 23 English colonial fellows of the Royal Society between 1700 and 1740, and indeed it was around the latter time that the term "British Empire" was first coming into use (Steele 1986: 264, 267, 278).

Moreover, writings by eighteenth-century American Quakers such as Elizabeth Ashbridge and John Woolman are notable as much for their implicit textual disjunctions as for their avowed authorial authenticity. While expounding a voice of "inward principle," of "plainness and simplicity" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 447, 451), both Ashbridge and Woolman find the haphazard course of worldly events necessarily drives a wedge between spirit and matter. Ashbridge's account of her life conflates different temporal modes, reinterpreting the past in light of the present as she attempts allegorically to make manifest the hand of providence and so to explain retrospectively how she came to marry a man she "had no Value for" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 422). Woolman, likewise, seeks divine solace in a silent place beyond the distortions of language, yet his quest for purity is hardly advanced by his story of a curious exchange with the chief of the Delaware Indians, who conveys through interpreters the enigmatic message: "I love to feel where words come from" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 452). The issue here, of course, is not any kind of disingenuousness on the part of these writers, but their imbrication within a world where the ironies of translation, in the broadest sense of that term, necessarily circumscribe the power of pure consciousness. Such forms of structural displacement were particularly prevalent in the eighteenth century, a time when geographical mobility was developing rapidly – Ashbridge casually remarks how her husband in 1740 "Enlisted him Self to go a Common soldier to Cuba" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 431) – and they suggest why questions associated with the ironies of representation loom large in any consideration of American culture during the later colonial period.

The religious revivals of the eighteenth century, then, should not be understood purely in terms of the evolution of a national narrative. After the Revolution, there was an increased tendency to represent American time sequentially, in terms of foreshadowings and providential outcomes, but during the middle part of the eighteenth century colonial America more frequently considered itself synchronically, in relation to what was happening simultaneously in other parts of the world. Arguments over the nature of American exceptionalism are complex and, as Jack P. Greene has observed, the typical anti-exceptionalist method of finding European patterns of behavior replicated in America does not of course mean that such cultural patterns were necessarily being developed in America in exactly the same way (Greene

1993: 204); nevertheless, it is clear that eighteenth-century America can hardly be understood except in relation to its various dialogues with the imperial centers of Europe. Thomas Jefferson, for one, envisaged such intertextual dialogues in quite literal terms, being so disconcerted by the works of David Hume – especially Hume's *History of England*, which Jefferson considered a dangerous counter-manifesto to the Constitution of the United States (Pocock 1999: 220) – that he suggested reprinting Hume with refutations in parallel texts (Colbourn 1965: 179). Overall, as the bibliographical researches of David Lundberg and Henry F. May have demonstrated, "genuinely skeptical and radical authors" such as Hume, Voltaire, Gibbon, Chesterfield, and Godwin were widely read in eighteenth-century America (Lundberg and May 1986: 270), and this undermines the legend of the country at this time as intellectually isolated, as a mere mighty fortress of Christian doctrine. Such, indeed, was the prevalence at this time of a cosmopolitan ideal, the notion that learning owed its allegiance to universal values and recognized no parochial boundaries, that only one American fellow of the Royal Society, Arthur Lee, thought himself compelled to resign from that body when America went to war with Britain over the question of political independence. Even then, Lee was grandly rebuked by the president of the Royal Society, Sir Joseph Banks, who declared that natural philosophers were above tawdry political differences in that they belonged to an international "republic of letters, and to the community of man and mind" (Schlereth 1977: 45). Characters such as Lee and Franklin were not typical of Americans at this time, of course, any more than Hume or Voltaire were typical of the English or the French; but it would be true to say that eighteenth-century America participated as much as any other country of the time in this wider world of learning associated with the transmission of ideas across national borders. After the Revolution, Franklin and Jefferson shrewdly attempted to reinvent themselves as diligent patriots seeking to interpose an "ocean of fire" between themselves and the corrupt Old World (Jefferson 1975: 474), but for most of their careers they looked at European culture very differently.

In line with this imitation of European manners, one important aspect of eighteenth-century American culture was its interest in the mores of polite society, epitomized by a half-concealed world of private associations dedicated to the circulation of *belles lettres* and other kinds of heterodox material. Associations such as the Tuesday Club in Annapolis, Maryland, of which Alexander Hamilton was the secretary, were significant not only for their evasion of the more public faces of Christian dogma but also for their implicit resistance to the coercive power of the state. Not surprisingly, these cultivated circles were stigmatized as impious by the evangelicals and tarred with the brush of anglophiliac frippery after the revolutionary momentum of the 1780s had established a particular form of moral identity for the United States. Nevertheless, American literature of the early and middle parts of the eighteenth century often concerns itself less with moral virtue or with questions of the national sublime than with more proximate worldly conditions. Sarah Kemble Knight's account of her journey between Boston and New York in 1704 deliberately eschews what it takes to be an old style of religious proselytizing and chooses instead to focus

its sharp commentaries on conditions of modern urban life as they were unfolding in the new century. Alexander Hamilton's *Itinerarium*, an account of his journey through the northern colonies in the mid-1740s, is openly scathing about religious enthusiasts – "This fellow, I observed, had a particular down hanging look which made me suspect he was one of our New Light biggots" – and it valorizes by contrast the pleasures of curiosity, diversity, and the good life. Taking his cue from a reading of Montaigne's *Essays*, "which is a strange medley of subjects and particularly entertaining," Hamilton extols the pleasures of eating, drinking, and debate; yet he is always uncomfortably aware of his own provincial situation and of the limitations of his interlocutors. In New York, he begins to exchange views on scientific matters with "my old friend Dr. McGraa," but their conversation soon stalls:

> We had a great deal of talk about attraction, condensation, gravitation, rarification, of all which I found he understood just as much as a goose; and when he began to show his ignorance of the mathematical and astronomical problems of the illustrious Newton and blockishly resolve all my meaning into judiciall astrology, I gave him up as an unintelligent, unintelligible, and consequently inflexible disputant. (Hamilton 1994:182, 191, 239–40)

Although there are of course elements of intellectual snobbery involved here, there is also a strong sense of social tensions deriving from the way Enlightenment values have invaded the American heartland, leading to a collision between worldly scholarship and religious conformity.

Hamilton's narrative also suggests the mixed conditions of American culture at this time, an implicit awareness of the American states as outposts of empire. With Augustan London as the "New Rome," American intellectuals recognized how the cutting-edge ideas of figures like Newton were reflected only cloudily across the Atlantic; yet many of these writers – Hamilton, Mather Byles, Joseph Green – textually internalize what Shields has called these "imperial thematics" (Shields 1990: 16, 43), producing narratives of colonial ambivalence which point simultaneously to distant specters of authority and experiential conditions of irony and absence. In the texts of Byles and Green, neoclassical poets in mid-eighteenth-century Boston who have been much neglected since the Revolution, there is an elaborate play with the iconography of royal power and an astute awareness of how this is refracted and inverted in the distant pastures of Massachusetts. The first African American poet, Phillis Wheatley, also manipulates this neoclassical style in her *Poems on Various Subjects* (1773), and, despite the obvious political issues which her work raises, questions about sincerity and authenticity are the wrong ones to be asking in relation to her verse. Influenced directly by Pope and Byles, Wheatley's style shifts subtly between alternative registers, so that her emphasis in "To Maecenas" on how the Roman author Terence was African by birth, like her paradoxical reshuffling of the categories of diabolism and blackness in "On Being Brought from Africa to America," implicitly draws attention to the conditions of slavery in the New World. Like Pope,

Wheatley works not through autobiographical expressiveness but through ironic intertextuality and the subversion of formal genres, a process entirely consonant with the multidimensional capacities of pre-revolutionary America, which traded off its position as a reflexive mirror of more established cultures.

One of the most sophisticated expressions in colonial America of this sense of transatlantic displacement can be found in the writings of William Byrd II, which formally refract the idea of division and turn the process of transgression, the movement across a dividing line, into a structural principle. Born in 1674 the heir to a large Virginia estate but educated in England, where he lived until 1705 (and then again between 1715 and 1726), Byrd embodied in his own life as he shuttled between London and Westover the movement between center and province that haunted the imaginations of Americans in this era. On one level Byrd might be seen simply as an imitation English gentleman, reading the *Tatler* in Virginia as early as 1710 and seeking to introduce the polite manners of the London metropolis into the apparently less propitious surroundings of Westover. But Byrd is much more than merely an Addison *manqué*, for his *History of the Dividing Line* (1729), besides being a surveyor's account of the boundary between Virginia and North Carolina, also touches implicitly on various other divisions permeating American life during this period: between the North and the South, between Christian virtue and pagan indifference. Byrd's personal journal of this surveying expedition, subsequently published as *The Secret History of the Line*, introduces another key opposition: the discrepancy between a respectable public facade and a private realm of insouciance where what he calls the "Bounds of Decency" are merrily broken. Irony thus becomes the axis upon which Byrd's narratives rotate, and the inherent doubleness of these textual perspectives accords both with his own sense of transatlantic displacement – "I often cast a longing Eye towards England, and Sigh'd" (Byrd 1994: 108, 92) – and, more generally, with his understanding of America not as an autonomous realm but as a province engaged in an increasingly complex relationship with a remote but powerful imperial center.

As Richard D. Brown has noted, there was a clear awareness in the Tidewater community and similar locations in eighteenth-century America of how new communications technologies were making the world a smaller place. The understanding of his own region as a relative construction, a fragment of the larger global environment rather than an entirely self-contained space, is crucial to Byrd's reflexive remapping of the boundaries of his society. Furthermore, the representation in *The Secret History* of personal identity as a protoplasmic phenomenon – the play with pseudonyms such as "Firebrand" and "Steddy," for example – fits with the author's intuitive sense of a radically unstable, mobile world. Equally, the tendency of Byrd's characters to slide into an animalistic demeanor – he notes how those who live on pork become "extremely hoggish in their Temper" (Byrd 1994: 96) – suggests a world where the dividing line between soul and body, spirit and matter, is by no means so impermeable as was believed by those Puritans who dominated intellectual life in America fifty years earlier. In 1984, Terry Castle published an influential article on "the carnivalization of eighteenth-century English narrative," where she argued that

Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, and other English writers introduce "a curious instability into the would-be orderly cosmos of the eighteenth-century English novel" through systematic reversals which cause "ideological destabilization" within "otherwise highly conservative fiction" (Castle 1984: 904, 910), and much the same case could be made in relation to eighteenth-century American culture. It is true that Byrd's Augustan pastoral has its more genteel and conventional side, just as Franklin's narratives can be read as instructional manuals of one kind or another; but there is in these texts, and in those of many other colonial American writers, a more self-subverting, surreptitiously carnivalesque dimension which deliberately estranges the narratives from the received ideologies and popular beliefs of their era.

One way of thinking about definitions of culture in colonial America would be to consider the development of different types of media and the role they played in challenging institutional orthodoxies. William Byrd had 3,500 books in his library at Westover, itself a provocative gesture at a time when print was only gradually emerging from a period of repression and scarcity. The Puritan authorities in Massachusetts had attempted well into the eighteenth century to restrict the circulation of published materials, unabashedly imposing censorship to ensure that only doctrines approved by themselves could be made public: in 1711, the General Court passed an act which promised fining and pillorying for anyone "composing, writing, printing, or publishing . . . any filthy, obscene, or profane song, pamphlet, libel or mock sermon, in imitation or in mimicking of preaching, or any other part of divine worship" (Kribbs 1985: 14–15). The first newspaper published in Boston, by Benjamin Harris on September 25, 1690, was shut down after just one issue, and it was not until 1704 that the weekly *Boston News-Letter* appeared. In 1721, James Franklin, Benjamin's elder brother, displeased Boston's civil and religious leaders by issuing *The New England Courant*, after the model of London journals such as the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*, and, though Franklin spent a month in prison for his pains, the burgeoning of journalism throughout eighteenth-century America soon became inevitable. The expansion of the population and the development of printing presses in geographical locations remote from New England, in particular the rise of Philadelphia as a business and political center in the eighteenth century, played a particularly important role in loosening these theocratic restrictions. It is important to recognize, though, the deep suspicions still harbored by civil and religious authorities towards these new modes of production and the general extent to which print culture was thought indecorously to be trampling on settled communities and interests. The Great Awakening of the 1740s was, among other things, a reactive attempt to restore the primacy of a traditional oral culture, to reestablish the visceral, immediate link between text and response, articulation and emotion, that appeared to be guaranteed by sermons or other forms of communitarian interaction. For the evangelical revivalists, print betokened a dangerously fragmented world where an unseen and impersonal authorship opened up the threat of more profane, clandestine channels of communication.

Writers such as Franklin, whose satires ventriloquize a range of voices not the author's own, skillfully make use of these new media conditions, so it is perhaps a

little misleading to suggest, as Michael Warner does, that "republican ideology was also an ideology of print" (Warner 1990: 63). Warner is undoubtedly correct to suggest the growth of republicanism in late eighteenth-century America was interwoven inextricably with the dissemination of a more abstract print culture, with the momentum of the patriot cause in 1776 being galvanized by the widespread availability of key written documents: Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, Jefferson's "Declaration of Independence," and other more transitory works. But this is different from the attempt to regard such documents themselves as emblematic of a particular nationalist cause, to hypothesize a symbiotic link between what Thomas Gustafson calls "representative words" and an ideology of the new republic. Of course, the patriots naturally attempted to promote a purified, regenerated version of the apparatus of communication as integral to their cause. "Our political harmony... is concerned in a uniformity of language," said Noah Webster in 1789 (Gustafson 1992: 40), and his own lexicographical projects might be seen as an attempt to eradicate the artificial accretions of the English tongue, to renew the language by stripping it of all its old historical baggage while remodeling it as a new, clean American idiom. What this ignores, though, is the way in which republican print culture could never be a transparent medium and the extent to which the American Constitution itself was necessarily an act of "framing" (Ferguson 1987: 162), the product of both law and artifice. As Jacques Derrida said on the 200th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the whole notion of any "truths" being "self-evident" – that is, existing anterior to their postulation – is a flat contradiction in terms. In this sense, Warner's analysis of literary textuality and ambiguity as an "aesthetic developed to fit the legitimacy of post-republican, liberal society" (Warner 1990: 117) seems to overlook the extent to which eighteenth-century culture was, as Derrida would say, "always already" saturated in such ambiguities. Moreover, the radically inconsistent nature of this culture was heightened in eighteenth-century America, as in England and France, by a social formation that was becoming increasingly stratified, as Enlightenment ethics of skepticism and reason ran alongside popular attachments to more traditional forms of authority.

One of the general problems in any consideration of the culture of colonial America is that there have been so few literary critics, as opposed to intellectual historians, working in this period. Although cultural historians from Parrington and Miller onward have been very astute in identifying the social and theological contexts within which particular narratives were produced, they have in general been less interested in discussing aspects of the heterodox or inchoate, those textual interstices where the transparent designs of allegory are held in balance with a more profuse sense of excess or political deviance. In Cotton Mather, for example, the structures of theological orthodoxy are always pressing up against the author's own delight in the intricacies of language, in the possibilities of print and the new book form, which is why his writings cannot readily be assimilated to any narrowly nationalistic impulse or explicated purely in terms of the ideas housed within them. As Jon Pahl has observed, theology was indeed the "predominant mode of public discourse" in colonial America

(Pahl 1992: 175), but many writers treated theological tenets in an idiosyncratic way. The most popular composer in eighteenth-century America, for example, was George Frederick Handel (Silverman 1976: 475), whose biblical oratorios express the doctrines of Christianity in an aestheticized manner which is not the pure transcendent aesthetics of Romanticism, concerned to internalize its "spirit" within a private sphere of its own, but rather involves a refraction of religious orthodoxy into sumptuous public style. (Tyler's categorization of Handel in *The Contrast* as part of fashionable English culture merely shows the extent to which national stereotypes had taken hold of the popular imagination in the 1780s.) Handel's deflection of religion into aestheticism is the same phenomenon that we encounter, in a different guise, in the works of Jonathan Edwards, where Calvinist predestination is reconfigured through the animate language of an everyday natural world.

David S. Shields has recently suggested the existence in eighteenth-century America of "communities of appetite and feeling" (Shields 1997: xvi) akin to Jürgen Habermas' description of an emerging public sphere at this time in England, where the growth of coffee-houses and secular literary periodicals enabled, in Habermas' words, an "emancipation of civic morality from moral theology" (Habermas 1991: 43). Although this beguiling idea may perhaps overstate the extent to which colonial America had become secularized and modernized, it operates as a welcome counterbalance to the more traditional understandings of colonial America as a cultural wasteland of biblical zealots, a patronizing misconception that of course circulated widely in Augustan England. One of the virtues of *The Literatures of Colonial America* is to suggest the diversity of constituencies in pre-Revolutionary America, a diversity inflected not just by region and language but also by divisions and inconsistencies within particular texts. To be sure, the narratives of this period are drawn from a wide spectrum of sources – sermons, travel writings, diaries, political treatises, as well as poems – so that narrowly restrictive definition of aesthetic autonomy, of the kind formulated by literary critics such as Coleridge in the early nineteenth century, would carry little relevance to this material. Nevertheless, in terms of its propensity for formal excess and its capacity frequently to resist being entirely locked into allegorical modes of representation, the culture of colonial America bears witness to many startling performances and aesthetic surprises.

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6
Teaching the Text of Early American Literature

Michael P. Clark

The field of early American literature has been substantially extended and invigorated over the past twenty years by the inclusion of numerous authors and texts that previously were seldom read and almost never taught. The expansion has been driven by methodological changes associated with the rise of cultural studies and with certain forms of postcolonial theory that opened up the canon to a much wider range of writing. At the same time, an increasing interest in the international character of early America has led to a corollary emphasis on comparative study across linguistic boundaries associated with the proto-national cultures of early European imperialism. These changes are manifest in evolving scholarly paradigms and in several new anthologies that reflect those paradigms and that influence the ways instructors present early American writing in the classroom. The result has been a greatly expanded list of works available to scholars and students and a much more eclectic set of topoi and interests to guide our inquiry.

What has not emerged to this point, unfortunately, is a clear object of study that could lend coherence to the field and integrity to the curriculum. The prevailing scholarly paradigms today do not provide students with a consistent thread that would unify texts and cultures which are now often presented simply as independent from, or in opposition to, the teleology of US nationalism that guided many earlier forms of American studies. Through the 1970s, early American literature as usually taught in the US was united culturally by identification with the English language of British colonists and chronologically by a thesis of continuity that read the Puritans retrospectively as predecessors of the Transcendentalists. The past twenty-five years, by contrast, have been characterized by challenges to both of those heuristic assumptions. Early American studies has become increasingly international and comparative as more works in translation are incorporated into the curriculum; an emphasis on social and cultural differences within European language groups has replaced simplistic assumptions about New Spain, the British colonies, or even Puritan New England as uniform, homogeneous communities; and the nationalist narratives of

early scholarship have given way to synchronic studies of early America within the context of European imperialism. This latter topic often takes the exegetical and pedagogical place formerly occupied by US nationalism (i.e., it is what we look for when we read, and what we talk about when we teach). Nevertheless, the forms of imperialism are so various (especially prior to the emergence of large European nation-states), and the emphasis on cultural particularity in early American studies so great, that interest in these issues among early Americanists has not led to a methodological consensus such as characterizes many postcolonial studies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As a result, early American literature remains somewhat inchoate as a field of study and fundamentally incoherent as a pedagogical topic.

Why this should be the case, and what might be done about it, are questions best answered by a quick look at some attempts to define early American literature associated with systematic pedagogical objectives embodied in anthologies.

Through the 1960s, most attention to American writing before 1800 was driven by political interests in American nationalism associated with the early Republic. Literary and cultural study outside of that political context remained dominated by Perry Miller's landmark intellectual history *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*, a brilliant accomplishment that opened the field to serious intellectual inquiry. Unfortunately, his relatively narrow range of sources and his penchant for unifying generalizations crossed the conceptual terrain of early American culture much like a beleaguered Dad on a family vacation: he got us up early, hit the road before the traffic, and did not stop for lunch. Like Miller's Puritans, in a phrase he made famous, Miller was a man on an errand into the scholarly wilderness of early America, and he made good time getting us on to the nineteenth century, where most literary scholars felt more at home (see Miller 1952). The excellent anthology by Miller and Thomas Johnson, *The Puritans: A Sourcebook of Their Writing* (1938, rpt. 1963), provided a handy map for students and teachers, and early American literature was codified as a minor part of the curriculum in English literary study focusing mainly on colonial Puritanism as a predecessor to the Transcendentalists: "From Edwards to Emerson," as Miller put it in his influential essay (Miller 1940).

After World War II, early Americanists began to complicate Miller's notion of a monolithic Puritanism. Still following a distinction Miller had made, literary historians in particular began to pay more attention to the complexities of the "heart" in the culture of New England than to the conceptual abstractions of the "head" that had preoccupied Miller's intellectual history. We initially heard much about "hot poetic emotion" and other affective forces fighting against the stricture of Puritan doctrine, and colonial *belles lettres* joined theology and history as proper objects of scholarly attention. With the rise of the New Criticism in the 1950s and 1960s, the biographical interests of the earlier expressivist critics gave way to a rigorous formalism that isolated aesthetic judgment from social issues and focused on works that rewarded close reading and the patient analysis of intricate metaphorical conceit, such as the baroque convolutions of Edward Taylor's meditations (see Clark 1985).

However narrow such formalist interests may appear today, they established early American literature as a legitimate object of critical analysis, and literary scholars began to fill in some of the blanks between the Puritans and the American Romantics in their books and in their classrooms. While the smooth assurance of American Augustan poets remained a hard sell (as did most eighteenth-century poetry), the Connecticut Wits fit perfectly into the prevailing taste for irony and "tension" among New Critics, and the generic experimentation (or hapless confusion) of Charles Brockden Brown's work began to attract attention from critics whose eyes had been trained (and hardened) by the difficulties of modernist fiction.

Teaching this new approach was greatly facilitated by two excellent anthologies edited by Harrison T. Meserole (1968, rpt. 1985) and Kenneth Silverman (1968) that focused on early American poetry. Two other collections of early American writing by Roy Harvey Pearce (1969) and Edwin Harrison Cady (1950, rpt. 1969) included a wider generic range of early American writing more typical of the omnibus anthologies used in undergraduate courses devoted to later periods. Other anthologies of early American writing by commercial houses went in and out of print regularly enough to evince a small but persistent market for such books in colleges and universities, and the sections devoted to earlier literature in more general anthologies of American writing began to expand as well. In 1985 the continuing influence of this scholarly and pedagogical interest in what might simply be called the "literary" aspects of early American writing was noted by the republication of Meserole's anthology as a companion to a collection of new essays, *Puritan Poets and Poetics: Seventeenth-Century American Poetry in Theory and Practice*, edited by Peter White with Meserole listed as advisory editor.

Five years after the republication of Meserole's anthology, all anthologies of American writing were radically changed by the publication of the new *Heath Anthology of American Literature* (1990, rpt. 1994), edited by Paul Lauter and a team of scholars representing several different languages and critical methodologies. Heath radically expanded the list of authors and languages represented in translation, while reducing the space previously occupied by canonical texts written in English. This change reflected equally fundamental changes in the field of American literary study as a whole. The Heath project was first discussed in 1968, the preface says, when "it was increasingly clear that any coherent and accurate account of our cultural heritage meant knowing a far wider range of authors" than the usual dozen or so "major" authors (the quotation marks are the editors') customarily included in anthologies. The political upheaval of that portentous year informs the revisionist purpose of the whole project: "Where were the women," Lauter asks of earlier anthologies, "blacks and other people of color"; writers of Spanish America? Works by these authors and other texts "concerned with similar issues of religion and politics were mainly dismissed as outside the bounds of literary study. It seemed inconsistent to relegate Cabeza de Vaca, Frederick Douglass or Charlotte Perkins Gilman to history or politics courses" (Lauter et al. 1990: xxxiii). Thus the diversity of the anthology was of two sorts: cultural (including categories of gender, race, and ethnicity or nationality) and

disciplinary: "our selections reflect an effort, which we believe appropriate and important, to reconnect literature and its study with the society and culture of which it is fundamentally a part." The changes in content therefore reflected a change in the nature of literary study itself: "literary study has moved away from purely formal scrutiny of isolated texts toward analyses which depend upon an examination of such historical contexts. We ask not only how a poem or story is constructed, about its language and imagery, but also about how it 'worked' in its world (and works in ours)" (ibid: xxxvi, xxxix).

That characterization of the general field of literary study is echoed by Philip Gura in his recent account of early American literary study over the past two decades, the period in which Gura edited *Early American Literature*. "Early American Literature at the New Century" argues that the most significant change in the field has been a subordination of literature *per se* to broader social issues (Gura 2000). Gura applauds what he called "scholars' increasing willingness to incorporate the discipline of history into their scholarship," and he portrays it as a corrective to the dark ages of the 1970s and 1980s, when history was quantitative and literary departments were ruled by poststructuralism and "things francophile" (ibid: 607, 617). Fortunately, Gura says, a new age has arrived:

> We are at a point . . . when we are moving away from studies centered on literary influence *per se* toward excavations of large-scale cultural sites . . . the chief prospective task of literary historians is to explore the manifold ways in which individuals at different points in time made sense of their lives through texts, all manner and number of them, and all placed solidly within the larger extra-textual archive that historians of culture . . . provide. (Ibid: 618–19)

The oxymoronic ideal of an "extra-textual archive" is not simply a lingering *ressentiment* against the Frenchified textualism of so much literary study in the 1980s. It reflects a more general reaction against aesthetic idealism and the Arnoldian notion that literature and culture offer a refuge from the petty economic concerns and historical pressures of the everyday world. Gura's more immediate target, however, is one of the most provocative attempts to redefine early American literature: William Spengemann's *A Mirror for Americanists: Reflections on the Idea of American Literature* (1989). Though unrelated to poststructuralism of any sort, Spengemann's definition of "American" literature rejected all "extra-textual" factors such as an author's biography or whether the text had been written within the geographical boundaries of what became the United States. Instead, he argued that American literature should be defined by the extent to which a text registered the impact of the New World upon the written discourse of Europe:

> What we are looking for is America in literature. But since America, as a place, has no inherent literary meaning of its own, it can acquire literary meaning only by taking on a literary form . . . If we can locate somewhere a literary work whose form can be attributed directly to the impact of America on the written language, then, no matter where

> we find it or who wrote it, we can say that we have discovered a literature that deserves to be called American. (Ibid: 48)

> If we define "American literature" in literary rather than in political or geographical terms, as writing conditioned by those linguistic changes that resulted from the transportation of European languages to the New World and from efforts on the part of those languages to apprehend that unprecedented phenomenon, then the Americanness of any literary work has nothing necessarily to do with its author's nationality or place of residence. (Ibid: 68)

This discursive definition of the field was embodied by an extraordinarily original anthology edited by Myra Jehlen and Michael Warner and published in 1997: *The English Literatures of America, 1500–1800*. (Gura calls this book an "implicit monument to Spengemann's premise.") The editors begin their introduction by noting the rapid expansion of English from the language of an isolated island in 1500 to a global discourse of colonialism three centuries later. They present their anthology as "a guide to the written culture" of the "complex Anglophone world" surrounding the Atlantic throughout the colonial period. The discursive basis of the collection was also evident in the title of the second large chapter – "Learning to Say 'America' in English." Frequent illustrations from the original texts emphasize how these documents appeared when they were first written and read, and the organizational scheme of the book as described by the editors foregrounds links among the brief excerpts while discounting more conventional methods of categorizing selections by genre, author, or even the complete work from which a selection has been excerpted. Noting that most of the selections are presented in chronological order, "so that a reader who moves from the beginning to the end will be able to appreciate the historical context," the editors confess to having done "some other kinds of organizing." They encourage readers to make other kinds of "intertextual connections," and to facilitate that independence "we have not hesitated to scatter an author's work across different chapters." "These writings belong to another linguistic as well as historic epoch," they continue, and while they urge the reader to pay attention to questions of power and ideology in the texts, they also remind us that "the pleasures of language, rhetoric, narrative, and form do not evaporate wherever power appears" (ibid: xxii).

The organizational originality and conceptual ambition of this anthology were immensely appealing and provocative to scholars. In the classroom, however, what the editors describe as "intertextual" connections among the selections often functioned more narrowly as merely lexical connections among fragments forged by the juxtaposition of brief excerpts from many different texts, few of which ever appeared in whole form. For readers relatively unfamiliar with the original sources, these lexical links, intriguing as they often were, did not always compensate for the loss of other forms of coherence when an author's work was "scattered" across different sections of the book. Whatever literary force emerged from the readings tended to work against rather than complement the more general historical coherence the editors claimed for the chronological sequence of the whole volume. Gura considers these problems

inevitable within any linguistic approach to the study of early American literature, and he observes how few other scholars have taken up Spengemann's call for a definition of American literature that would focus on changes in literary discourse. "The train has left the station," Gura says, "and most of the passengers have bought tickets to destinations . . . in departments given to cultural studies" (ibid: 15).

In addition to methodological objections to the centrality of literature and discourse in the field of early American studies, Gura is equally skeptical about limiting the notion of America to the Anglophone world or to any single model of unity or consensus in early American society. " 'Continuities' scholars" such as Sacvan Bercovitch have perpetuated Miller's interest in an American tradition unified by persistent underlying themes that transcend historical differences, Gura says, but fortunately continuity has given way to interest in the fissures and fragments of American society, a model of "dissensus" rather than "consensus," as Bercovitch himself labels it (Gura 2000: 604; see Bercovitch 1993). This new interest in dissension and difference led to studies of the particularities of race, gender, class, and nationality, and it expanded the field across linguistic boundaries by emphasizing the inherently international character of colonialism and early modern culture in general. As Gura puts it, "the more one investigates the literature of America in Spanish or French, or the writing by Africans about the Atlantic world, the more difficult it is to pull any one dominant thread in literary discourse about the region" – or even to define that region in geographical terms (Gura 2000: 611).

This transnational notion of "American" was reflected in the anthology edited by Susan Castillo and Ivy Schweitzer and published in 2001, *The Literatures of Colonial America*. The collection is explicitly linked to the commitment for a transnational multilingual American studies extending beyond the borders of the United States (ibid: xvi). It devotes almost half of its 600 pages to translations of texts written in languages other than English, which are organized according to chronology and region but not segregated by original language. The next year, an anthology edited by Carla Mulford, *Early American Writings*, included a wide range of Anglophone works but also added excerpts from translations of many non-English texts. The pointed substitution of "Writings" for "Literature" in the title also echoes Gura's subordination of literature to social context. This point is carried through in the organizational scheme of Mulford's book, which abandons generic categories (poetry, fiction, travel writing, etc.) in favor of a combination of chronological, national, and geographic categories within "the Atlantic world" from the fifteenth through the eighteenth centuries (Mulford et al. 2002: xvii): "Britain's First Century in America," "New Spain in North America," "New France in North America," "Native Peoples of Eastern North America," etc. Within those categories, there are occasional small groupings of miscellaneous poems (e.g., "A Collection of Poems from New England"), but otherwise within the national and geographical categories the order is roughly chronological, leaving Winthrop's "Model of Christian Charity" next to selections from Thomas Morton's *New English Canaan*, followed by Roger Williams, John Eliot's *Indian Dialogues*, and Bradstreet's poetry. "Generic comparisons are also

possible," as the editor observes in the preface, and some of the brief introductions to the entries do address the place of these texts in literary history, but the broader organizational scheme of this anthology clearly subordinates literary concerns to the social and historical emphases advocated by Gura.

This subordination of literary concerns to more abstract social, historical, and cultural issues is not unreasonable given the extensive use of texts in translation, which makes close textual analysis problematic and renders direct quotation almost useless as evidence. Scholars and students who lack the requisite multilingual skills might be expected to turn their attention to extra-textual matters simply as a practical expedient. As Gura suggests, however, that turn is understood today less as a compensation for the lack of linguistic training than as a positive methodological innovation in the name of history, diversity, and inclusion. Unfortunately, this methodological turn away from the language of the text creates its own set of problems, as is evident in the inclusion of material related to native peoples in the colonial period. Most of these selections are based on later accounts by European invaders and reconstructions by nineteenth-century ethnographers. Mulford devotes three sections to such material, even though she warns that references to non-native peoples in these myths are obviously interpolations from later periods: "It is impossible to offer 'authentic' stories *as they existed* in what (in the West) is considered historical time," she says (Mulford et al. 2002: 2; Mulford's italics). Nevertheless, notwithstanding the warning, including these so-called native texts in the anthology inevitably misrepresents the status and function of the stories in their original cultural context. At the same time, it discounts the textual basis of the European material as it functioned in those cultures. Such selections create a decidedly inauthentic dialogue between native and European people that resembles nothing so much as the conversations with Indians soberly reported by Columbus in his first voyage despite the mutual unintelligibility of their languages. Columbus offers these exchanges as the basis for his assurances about gold just over the horizon, Amazon tribes on the next island over, and a race of headless people with faces in their chests. Such are the destinations to which Gura's train leads, leaving some scholars longing for a better mode of transportation.

Fortunately, the need to choose between inauthenticity and the impossible recovery of native culture in historical time is a false dilemma that can be left to occupy the extra-textual archivists who have created it. There is a plethora of textual records that grew out of French and English missionaries' contact with the Indians in which the presence of the native peoples is registered vividly without the illusion of direct representation. For example, Mulford includes in her anthology selections from John Eliot's *Indian Dialogues*, a collection of imaginary conversations between Puritan missionaries and hypothetical Indians that was intended to serve as a catechism for missionaries in the field. Unlike the "native" stories in other sections of the book, Eliot's *Dialogues* at least have the virtue of proclaiming themselves as deliberate fabrications of the Indian voice, rather than the real thing. But why choose the illusions of the *Dialogues* rather than any of the extensive transcriptions of native conversion

narratives from the Eliot Tracts, which focus directly on the complicated issue of Englishmen translating speeches by Indians who are attempting to render Christian concepts in the Algonquian language? Tinker, Wyss, and O'Brien have all demonstrated the precision with which facts about the natives' lives can be extracted from such material, and the explicit focus on the scene of textual production and the act of translation itself foregrounds the mediating process that is entirely occluded from the selections usually intended to represent Native American beliefs and expression before 1800.

The greater authenticity of texts such as the transcriptions from the Eliot Tracts derives from their direct attention to words and images as they are rendered on the page. Directing students' attention to the acts of translation and transcription foregrounded by these texts does not resolve the semantic difficulties of dealing with multilingual international comparisons, of course, but it does provide a textual ground from which that comparison can be approached that is every bit as concrete and specific – but much more accessible and dramatically immediate – than any contact zone on a beach or battleground that the historian can only tell us about. Unlike the methodology of historical reconstruction, which directs our attention away from the production and reception of texts and toward some extra-textual context for the words as they were originally spoken or written, attending to the text – its formal and semantic properties, its tropes, its materiality as a signifier, its cultural work as an object of production and of reproduction in the acts of creation and reception – focuses our attention on those properties of the historical event that persist across chronological, linguistic, and cultural differences. Far from being an idealist escape from history, this focus on the text establishes a specific object of knowledge for historical inquiry through which different cultures and languages can be connected in a coherent field of study without reducing them to specious universal themes, reconstructing the past in the image of our present concerns, or abandoning interpretation altogether to a vacuous celebration of cultural difference.

Focusing on the text can also help relieve the frustration we all feel when faced with myriad practical contradictions between our missions as scholars and teachers. As the cultural and geographical range of early American studies has increased in scope and complexity, and as most research has grown more specialized and detailed in its focus, the prospect of "covering" the field in a single course and textbook has become more illusory than ever. Similarly, the possibility of doing justice in the classroom to our increasingly nuanced understanding of Puritanism, early exploration narratives, or any other topic in the period has all but disappeared. The intractable nature of these difficulties is so great that it led one reviewer of Mulford's *Teaching the Literatures of Early America* to advocate abandoning the connection between research and teaching in early American studies altogether and focusing instead on what can be done effectively in each arena separately (Gardner 2001). Despite the pedagogical challenge of linking our research and teaching, though, we cannot simply surrender one or the other. Courses that are not inspired and challenged by research can only produce students who will reproduce the limits of their education rather than reflect on those

limits and continue learning. Even worse, I suspect that such courses can only be taught comfortably by teachers who have forgotten the spark of excitement and the thrill of exploration that drives all useful research and that inspires all effective teaching. Basing courses on the text of early American literature can help literary scholars avoid this pressure to split research and teaching by directing students to an authentic object of study that engages their experience as readers in the present directly with the historical situations in which the texts were originally written and read.

For the purposes of illustration, we may distinguish between two different perspectives on the text of early American literature, both of which reflect the interests and values of early American writers and of the people for whom their writing was intended. Those perspectives are (1) rhetorical and (2) what may be termed textual or "aesthetic," a term that includes attention to the representational dimension of literary art in general as well as to specific tropes, forms, and conventions.

A focus on the rhetorical situation in which texts functioned at the time they were produced and used can serve as a ground for comparison of texts across languages and cultures that are otherwise so different as to be mutually incomprehensible. Both scholars and teachers of early American literature frequently tend to focus on themes such as cannibalism, "wonder," the savage, and similar terms and concepts. These motifs, however, are too prone to simplified abstraction and generalization to be very useful as analytical or pedagogical tools – the empty currency of "the Other" used to designate any non-European identity being perhaps the most egregious example of this debilitating tendency. We need to look beyond these thematic motifs to dimensions of the texts that support their operation in the situations in which they are written and read. Consider the example of two texts that loom large within their respective traditions but are little known and almost never taught across the cultural and disciplinary boundaries separating them: the *Requerimiento*, and John Cotton's sermon "Gods Promise to his Plantation." As all Hispanists know, and as many scholars of Anglo-American literature do not, the *Requerimiento* is a formal, legal document that was used by the conquistadores in the sixteenth century to authorize their relations with the indigenous peoples they encountered. Typically, it was read in Spanish to the indigenes by a priest if one was available, and the reading occurred in a space between two groups assembled for the occasion: the Europeans on one side, the Indians on the other, with the priest in the middle. The message was simple: convert or be conquered. "If you do so you will do well . . . if you do not do this . . . I certify to you that with the help of God we shall forcefully enter into your country and shall make war against you" (Gibson 1968: 60). Though much ridiculed today for the transparent hypocrisy of the occasions – the Indians often could not understand the language, and Hobson himself would blush at the choice they were given – the *Requerimiento* in fact operated within a sophisticated legal tradition and was taken seriously by the Spaniards as a contract. Its legal authority and spiritual sincerity should be considered no more or less significant than the professions of missionary zeal by the British colonists a century later.

John Cotton was one of the most influential Puritan ministers who emigrated to America, though his work is little known by scholars outside the fields of English and American history and literature. "Gods Promise" was delivered to the emigrating colonists just before they left for America. (Cotton did not accompany the first group.) In the sermon, Cotton encourages the colonists to remain faithful to the religious principles that bind them together with the friends and family they are leaving at home. He invokes the covenant between God and the Elect as a contract with specific terms the colonists must honor if they expect to retain God's protection in the dangerous new land: take care that God's ordinances be implanted within you, Cotton says, elaborating on the "plantation" metaphor. "If you take rooting in the Ordinances . . . no sonnes of violence shall destroy you." On the other hand, he warns, "if you rebell against God, the same God that planted you will also roote you out." The terms of the covenant are unremarkable and would have been entirely predictable in any Puritan sermon, as would Cotton's elaboration of the covenant as an economic contract between the British and the Indians: "offend not the poore Natives, but as you partake in their land, so make them partakers of your precious faith: as you reape their temporalls, so feed them with your spiritualls" (Cotton 1630: 18, 17, 19).

The geographical, cultural, proto-national, and discursive differences between these texts are self-evident, and they usually have kept the texts isolated from one another in classrooms and scholarship. The rhetorical similarity of the two texts is striking, however. They are both explicit performative utterances that establish and/or confirm a contractual relation between the European and indigenous populations and that authorize the European incursion. The performative act occurs literally "in between" the two populations, as if the priest has finished reading the *Requerimiento* and then turns to the European (now British) audience and reads another version of the contract for them.

This rhetorical parallel is invisible if we view these documents and the occasions in which they functioned strictly in terms of the linguistic communities of Spanish vs. English, or solely within the separate legal and theological traditions of the two cultures. It is equally invisible if the rhetorical specificity of the texts is dissolved into vapid abstractions about imperialist arrogance or bad faith. The connection between the two texts is rhetorical. It emerges only by focusing on the way the physical presence of these two European populations in the new world was structured and sustained by the particular texts in question – not by references to religious beliefs or legal traditions to which the words refer, but by the rhetorical gesture of reference itself as embodied in the production and reception of each text as a performative act. Studying and teaching the rhetorical dimension of such texts provides a consistent focus for instruction that can help us map the differences between the Iberian and Anglo cultures without reducing them to empty thematic generalizations or abandoning comparison entirely in pursuit of a pointless pluralism.

Such rhetorical analysis of course would have been immediately recognizable at the time for any reader or listener educated within the Ciceronian traditions of European literacy, which formed a discursive community that transcended purely linguistic

differences. Yet rhetoric is only one aspect of a much broader interest in the production, reception, and circulation of texts among early American writers that makes comparative study not only possible but also imperative. In some cases that interest led early American authors to claim a status for their texts that would embarrass even the most ardent of those poststructuralists who Gura says drove long-suffering historians to ground thirty years ago. We can find this status claimed for the text in one of the earliest documents from the conquistadore tradition, Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's *Relación* of 1542. Cabeza de Vaca had served as treasurer for the ill-fated expedition of Pánfilo de Narváez, which originally intended to claim what is now the Gulf Coast of the United States for the Spanish Crown. The expedition of five ships and almost six hundred men was plagued by a series of disasters and bad judgments that finally left only Cabeza de Vaca and three other men wandering in the region for eight years. His *Relación* was intended to justify the failed conquest and defend his own role in it, clearly with an eye toward obtaining the support of the Crown for his political ambitions in the New World.

In the prologue to what has now become a canonical text in early American literature, Cabeza de Vaca compares himself and his exploits to those of more conventionally successful conquistadors and argues that his account can and should be valued as the product of his adventure. "It is the fault of no one," he says, "but solely the will and judgment of God," that some expeditions are less successful than others.

> Since neither my advice nor my best efforts sufficed to win what we had gone to accomplish . . . no opportunity was afforded me to perform more service than this, which is to bring Your Majesty an account of what I learned and saw . . . I had always the greatest care and diligence to remember everything very particularly, so that if at some time God Our Lord would be pleased to bring me hither where I am now, my account could testify to my good will and be of service to Your Majesty . . . I entreat Your Majesty to receive it [i.e., his account] as a mark of service, for it is the only thing that a man who left those lands naked could bring out with him. (Cabeza de Vaca 1993: 3–4)

Over one hundred years later, a similar point is made by the Commissioners of the United Colonies in New England in their Epistle Dedicatory to John Eliot's translation of the English Bible into Algonquian (1663). The letter defends Eliot's missionary effort and by extension the entire enterprise of British colonization by comparing its professed evangelical objective to the mercenary interests of the Spanish. To demonstrate the difference, the letter then explains how Eliot's Algonquian Bible is the British equivalent of the gold that the Spanish extracted from South America: "The Southern colonies of the *Spanish Nation* have sent home from this *American Continent*, much gold and silver, as the Fruit and End of their Discoveries and Transplantations: that (we confess) is a scarce Commodity in this Colder Climate," the Commissioners admit. In place of those metals, they offer Eliot's Bible, which

represents the "Fruits of our poor Endeavours to Plant and Propagate the Gospel here." Yet what appears to be a poor substitute is in fact, "upon a true account . . . as much better than Gold, as the Souls of men are more worth then the whole World. This is a Nobler Fruit (and indeed in the Counsels of All-disposing Providence, was an higher intended End) of *Columbus* his Adventure" (A4 recto).

In these examples, the language and narrative of these texts are explicitly presented as a substitute for gold, the iconic material product of conquest and a symbol for all that is non-literary, empirical, "extra-textual," about early American literature. To be sure, it is the referents of these texts that are portrayed as the basis of their value – the knowledge of God, the useful information Cabeza de Vaca gathered in his wanderings – but there is no pretense that such content can circulate or be known as fact outside of the texts that embody it, just as the true value of gold lies less in the ore than the coins and jewelry that were the objects of European greed and desire. To the contrary, both Cabeza de Vaca and the Commissioners explicitly offer their texts as superior to the objects and material wealth sought by lesser men *because* the texts differ from the material world to which they refer, and it is that difference that warrants the historical significance claimed for the two documents and their authors.

If we press this analogy a bit further, we can find an equivalent of the refiner's fire and the minter's stamp in the aesthetic elements of early American writing. The representational functions of tropes and literary forms constitute the richest form of connection among texts from different cultures, and they can offer a dramatic and accessible instructional focus in the classroom that transcends linguistic differences. Foremost among the stylistic features of early exploration writing, for example, is the use of eyewitness narration. Eyewitness narrative transmutes experience into meaning by joining text to the world while at the same time distinguishing the text from the lived experience, the linguistic equivalent of the paradoxical position of a "participant-observer." In Cabeza de Vaca's account of the failed conquest, the authority accruing to military success is (of necessity) entirely supplanted by this connection between the work and the world in eyewitness testimony as it is embedded in the obvious pun on "eye" as part of the actual body moving through the New World and the "I" that represents that body in the text of the narrative. The historical association of eyewitness testimony with the discovery of America is so close that Spengemann argues the conflict between traditional forms of authority and the experience of the eyewitness is one of the defining motifs of "American" literature because it registers the impact of experience in the New World on existing forms of discourse. Useful as that definition is, however, it still approaches the text as an effect of a distant extra-textual cause (the discovery of a new world) that is the real meaning of "America," whereas as Cabeza de Vaca and the Commissioners suggest, at least some early American writers proposed to reverse that cause-effect relation and presented that extra-textual knowledge as an effect of the text that the authors and printers put into the hands of the reader. That reversal is made possible by those attributes of language that allow for the exchange of the "eye" and "I" or, more generally, that allows for the

conversion of lived experience into narrative. Those attributes can be most simply defined as representation *per se*, literary tropes, or, even more simply, art.

The figure of the eyewitness thus stands for the substitution of (textual) work for world that makes any act of representation possible. Along with more specific literary forms and tropes – sonnets, genres, character-types, first-person narration, Petrarchan love poetry, metaphor, in short literature as such – aesthetic practices in various media constituted a genuinely international community during the period of exploration. The connections associated with that aesthetic continuity among the visual and verbal depictions of early contact were at least as influential and significant historically as the cultural and linguistic differences between writers in Spanish, English, and French. In addition, since representational strategies figure centrally in what Stephen Greenblatt has called the "mimetic exchange" of the contact zone, the literary foregrounding of representation as an explicit, self-conscious presentation of one's place in the world also provides a valuable perspective on the mechanisms by which the "European" emerged as such against the non-European people of America and thereby became visible to history.

Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* (1688) provides a dramatic example of how literary conventions, tropes, and aesthetics establish a point of view that makes events legible within a historical framework. This book has entered the canon of early American literature via William Spengemann's argument that it constitutes the earliest American novel. That claim is based on two characteristics of Behn's work: (1) conflict between the genres of romance and of the "Brief True Relation" characteristic of exploration literature, which "generates a sequence of events and a level of discourse somewhere between fiction and history, whose import can only be called novelistic"; and (2) Behn's insistence on eyewitness testimony and "the authority of personal experience," which we find "only in the narratives of New World travelers." The impact of the discovery of America on English literary forms, Spengemann argues, is visible in these generic and stylistic conflicts: "Having embodied her romantic hopes in the noble African Prince Oroonoko and then cast him upon the narrative tide of the Brief True Relation, it seems she could only sit and watch him perish" (Spengemann 1989: 58, 70, 67).

Spengemann's notion of American literature fits a neo-Kantian model in which a set of categories (literary and stylistic in this case) confronts experience that it cannot contain, and in that confrontation the categories are modified under pressure from the extra-literary experience of America as a geographical and historical reality. Yet Behn herself does not subordinate the text of her book to an extra-textual force; instead, she emphasizes the textuality of the narrative in which that confrontation with the world is represented. For all of the narrator's emphasis on eyewitness testimony, that point of view and the authority accorded to it by exploration writing is heavily ironic in the narrative. Behn presents the eyewitness's perspective as a deliberate construction designed to produce an aesthetic effect rather than as unmediated contact with the reality of the New World. At one point in the book, for example, the narrator and some other ladies in the colony decide to visit some Indians who live nearby. Like

similar scenes in the "True Relation," the account of this trip is replete with ethnographic detail, including comments on the naked bodies of the natives contrasted to the elaborate costumes of the Europeans, "Numberless Wonders" expressed on both sides, an exchange of gifts, and remarks upon the Indians thinking the Europeans are gods.

Unlike the accounts of Columbus, Vespucci, and the many other explorers who preceded her, however, Behn's narrator says that she imagined her encounter with the Indians merely as a "Diversion" that occupies some idle moments. She approaches it with all the titillation and amusement of a tourist standing in line for a ride at Disneyland. The "contact" with the natives is in fact a carefully constructed illusion. The ladies are willing to chance the encounter only if the noble Oroonoko (here referred to by his slave-name Caesar) accompanies them to protect them from real harm. In addition, in order to communicate with the Indians, the ladies arrange to take along a translator, a Fisherman who lived near the Indian town. This latter addition to the entourage presents a problem, however:

> because he [the Fisherman] was known to the *Indians*, as trading among 'em, and being, by long living there, become a perfect *Indian* in colour, we, who had a mind to surprize 'em, by making them see something they never had seen, (that is, *White* People) resolv'd only myself, my Brother and woman should go: so Caesar, the fisherman, and the rest, hiding behind some thick Reeds and flowers that grew in the Banks, let us pass on towards the Town. (Behn 1973: 55)

In other words, contact between European and Other, White and Indian, is possible only by hiding (literally in this case) the mediating forces that allow for its representation as an eyewitness account within an ideologically coherent framework. Here those mediating forces are military superiority in the person of Oroonoko; the ideal of communication embodied in the translator; and the troublesome presence of the Fisherman's hybridity, which marks the "contact" as secondary or belated and complicates the simplistic binary of racial purity that might otherwise be "reconstructed" as historical truth from the evidence of the text. In this episode contact is constructed as a theatrical illusion for the amusement and delight of tourists and readers, rather than as a direct encounter with some extra-textual reality of the New World, yet it is the process of staging America as spectacle that allows us to see the true complexity of that world and our place in it.

It is precisely this resistance to transparent reference and the quasi-materialist reconstruction of context that constitutes the true value of the text as an object of historical study in early American literature. In our classrooms we may approach textuality in many forms – as the rhetorical situation in which texts functioned at the time they were written, as an ontological challenge to a simplistic materialism, or as a formal structure and self-reflexive trope. In each case, rather than attempting to escape history, focusing on the text opens up a window on the very world from which literature appears to turn its back as metaphor and illusion. What defines the

text and enables it to function in the world is the difference between the literary work and the world to which it refers. It is *that* difference, the contact zone between work and world, that we as scholars occupy in common with our students. It is that difference that constitutes the ground on which America emerged in history, and it is that difference than can lend coherence and historical immediacy to courses in early American literature. As our understanding of early America grows more complex and diverse, literature thus becomes all the more important, for the literary text – or, more specifically, the self-reflexive tropes and overt resistance to direct reference that make the text literary – provides an authentic object of study in our classrooms that makes dissensus legible and makes cultural difference a viable form of social and historical knowledge. Defining early American literature simply as a pluralistic collocation of different cultures and languages will undermine even the possibility of a coherent pedagogical program. We should instead be directing our students to the textual ground on which those cultures met and America was formed. Any train of thought that attempts to leave the text behind will get us nowhere.

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7

Teaching with the New Technology: Three Intriguing Opportunities

Edward J. Gallagher

Websites, hypertext, discussion boards, chat rooms, email, syllawebs, multimedia, Powerpoint, wired classrooms, course management systems, virtual community, going online, hybrid courses, blogging – what's in this new technology for Early Americanists? What, in fact, is at stake for the teaching profession in general? I am old enough to remember when desks didn't come with computers grafted on them and when "lecture" wasn't a dirty word. But even if you are fortunate enough to be a digital native rather than the digital immigrant I am, there still are far too few pedagogical models and certainly no traditional pedagogical lore based on decades of experience to guide your thinking and shape your practice. Old and young teachers alike, we live in what Margaret Mead calls a prefigurative culture, a period of rapid change in which the past no longer seems a sure guide for the present or the future (Mead 1978: xx). The challenge for all teachers is to somehow get a handle on what's happening, to figure out where, if at all, the new technology fits in our pedagogy.

How to get that handle? Sounding a little too much like Thoreau perhaps (it is instructive that the man who warned us about Princess Adelaide and the whooping cough is on my mind as I write *this* essay!), I am going to write about my own experience and my own exploration because there isn't anybody else whom I know as well. I got a handle on the new technology by participating in a series of institutes and workshops: Cindy Selfe's Computers in the Writing Intensive Classroom at Michigan Tech, Randy Bass's American Studies Crossroads Project at Georgetown, Tracey Weiss' New Media Classroom Workshop at Millersville, and Randy Bass' Visible Knowledge Project also at Georgetown. That trail does you no good, of course, but I can point you to one epiphany I had along the way that might prove helpful. I found both a handy way to think about the new technology and the template for the current phase of my teaching life in a short section of Randy Bass et al.'s *Intentional*

Media. In "Framework: New Media Learning Environments in Culture and History" (Bass 1998: 40–58), Bass and Bret Eynon lay out three "intriguing opportunities for meaningful learning for students in history and culture classes": inquiry-based learning, bridging reading and writing through online interaction, and making student work public in new media formats. Boiling their categories down into my own cutesy rhyming shorthand, what I saw was an invitation to think about new pedagogy in terms of *investigation*, *collaboration*, and *publication*. And what I heard was an implicit challenge: if we are only using the new technology to create flat syllabi, to embroider essays with images, or because of external pressure, and so forth, we are missing the boat. So I set about rather systematically to think about my courses in terms of these three "intriguing opportunities." How could the new technology help my students engage in original research, process their knowledge in a classroom community, and present their work in new ways?

Investigation

I remember when Perry Miller's two-volume anthology on *The Puritans* was, in effect, my Early American literature course. Now we are on the road to having every text printed in and about early America available on the Web. "The rapid growth of digital archives," say Bass and Eynon, "is among the most valuable trends in the development of the World Wide Web" (Bass 1998: 42), and John McClymer (2003a) sees us moving from a "pedagogy of scarcity" to a "pedagogy of abundance." For Early Americanists, for instance, virtually our whole universe of source material printed in English (the availability of primary sources in other languages is not so good) soon will be available in ways unthinkable but a short time ago.

Though for now limited to library subscription, Early English Books Online is digitizing publications between 1475 and 1700 in the Pollard & Redgrave, Wing, and Thomason catalogues; the digital edition of Charles Evans' *American Bibliography* (1639–1800), known to us in the Early American Imprints microfiche edition, is now virtually complete; and Series I of the American Periodicals Series provides journals between 1741 and 1800 (for an example of the kind of work that can be done when a range of journals is available, see Kamrath 2002). And the Early Americas Digital Archive, just developing under the general editorship of Ralph Bauer at the University of Maryland at College Park, promises to be *the* central costless place to go for access to many of the important works between 1492 and 1820, not only in English but other languages as well. The result of an initiative to examine "early American literatures from a hemispheric perspective," the EADA "invites scholars from all disciplines to submit their editions of early American texts for publication." In addition, many of the primary documents in our field are available here and there on the Web, though some, unfortunately, on ephemeral sites. To try to keep track of these ever-changing resources, I maintain a list of websites pertinent to our field on the Society for Early Americanists' website.

To give just one specific example of the enormous boon this availability of texts confers on the field, I was able to teach a tightly focused and specialized seminar on "The Literature of Justification" in fall 2003 with no access problems whatsoever. In the "old days" we would have had to depend on summaries of the key primary texts analyzed by Robert A. Williams in our framing secondary text, his *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought: The Discourses of Conquest* – we would have had to read *about* them. But now we were not totally dependent on our critic. We had immediate access to a variety of arguments justifying taking land from and making war on Native Americans from every contact zone, among them Newfoundland's *A True Reporte of New Found Landes* (1583) by George Peckham, New England's *Christenings Make Not Christians* (1645) by Roger Williams, Jamestown's *A Relation of the Barbarous Massacre* (1622) by Edward Waterhouse, Hakluyt's *Discourse of Western Planting* (1584), written to lubricate the Roanoke expedition, Tom Paine's *Public Good: Being an Examination into the Claim of Virginia to the Vacant Western Territory* (1781), and even the translations of Las Casas' *Brevíssima Relación de la Destrucción de las Indias* as *The Spanish Cruelties*.

But if the Web is only our personal library of libraries and anthology of anthologies, as good as that might be (as great as that is, in fact!), that is no more intrinsically intriguing pedagogically than putting our lectures on a class website. One should think of a range of readily accessible texts as a duty, not a virtue. No, what makes the proliferation of texts really and truly intriguing is the opportunity to put the "novice in the archives" (Bass 1998: 46), that is, to construct authentic inquiry-driven assignments in large information-rich archives comprised of a complex variety of voices and viewpoints. Sprung from predigested lectures, cramped anthologies, and traditional metanarratives, students are free to explore, discover, select, and interpret primary material on their own. Investigations of this nature and scale have simply not been available for students before. To cite just one ready example from our field, perhaps the essential resource for understanding New France is the series of Jesuit Relations spanning the years 1610 to 1791. In a world without the Web, students would need fortunate access to one of the few hundred libraries in the country holding the unwieldy 73-volume Reuben Gold Thwaites edition (probably held in a restricted area and certainly practicable for use by only one person at a time) or use the undeniably fine but heroically abridged edition by Allan Greer. Think about the stories about New France the Greer can't tell. Where is, for instance – for the story of justification that I want to tease out – the key, concise Le Jeune chapter "On the Means of Converting the Savages"? Think about the stories you are interested in. Think about the investigative possibilities the two Web versions of the full Jesuit Relations provide.

Under the spell of Bass and Eynon, I made one of these archives, and I'll bet we all could to our communal profit. My archive is on the Enola Gay controversy, but it could just as well have been on the Antinomian controversy and will serve here as a suggestive model for any number of similar endeavors in Early American studies. I made myself master of the Enola Gay controversy – the contentious national debate

in the mid-1990s about how to display the plane that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima – in the traditional ways: collecting newspaper articles, copying documents at the Smithsonian archives, interviewing participants, and so forth. I may write an article on the Enola Gay controversy as a result of my research someday. I may write a book about the Enola Gay controversy someday based on the three file cabinet drawers of material in my office. Someday I may proclaim my truths about the Enola Gay controversy. But in the meantime what I have done is to make all my research available through the Web – over 1,300 documents – and offer students the opportunity to form their own ever-fresh interpretations of the controversy. My pedagogical goal sufficiently motivated me to gain a rudimentary knowledge of website building, and I reached out to the technical staff at my university for what I couldn't do. The site is simple and straightforward, without "bells and whistles," and easy for me to maintain. I have used it in a half-dozen courses, augmenting it each time, always enriching the resources. Imagine the Web dotted with nodes of focused Early American archives developed from what is already in our file drawers. What perhaps unique lodes of primary and secondary material are you sitting on?

Sense the shift in the role of teachers in this new situation. It is not just a matter of turning students loose in an archive. They are, after all, still novices, as Bass reminds us (Bass 1998: 46). They do not have the skills we veteran researchers have, skills that often now operate at the level of instinct and thus may be virtually invisible even to us. The teacher needs to become a kind of choreographer, creating what Bass calls "open but guided experiences" (Bass 1998: 47), what Bass and Eynon call "the pedagogy of unfiltered information" (Bass 1998: 74), and what McClymer (2003b) calls "structured access to abundance." But what do such lofty phrases mean on the front line? What do they look like when translated into the classroom trenches?

I tried to confront these questions in another course – also not related to Early American studies, but similarly paradigmatic – which I co-taught with five advanced graduate students. In "Virtual Americana" we used five large archives in the Library of Congress's online American Memory project (which boasts 7 million items in over 100 collections) as our sole texts – archives in areas in which we were not expert, enabling us to virtually take the course with the students. You can see some details of our approach on the course website, but pertinent here is the nub of the brainstorming we had to do about the kinds of scaffolding that would be necessary and the kinds of assignments that would be efficacious when we put these novices in these archives. For instance, we finally settled on these four kinds of assignments to conclude the units, none of which, we felt, we had ever done before nor would be readily doable using traditional class materials: to *explore* the multiple causes of an event, to *test* the published claims of an expert historian working from the same bundle of data, to *construct* an interpretive narrative of the effects of an event, and to *reflect* on the lens through which the students themselves constructed their interpretations. The result of the students' "doing history" in these ways rather than just reading in it or about it was a profitably stark and cautionary awareness that history is the creature of the

doers. And it was a liberating experience, as this chant from our course evaluation captures: "I am scholar – hear me roar! Primary materials rule."

Thus, while I hope we will continue to see a proliferation of individual Early American texts on the Web, emanating in most cases, no doubt, from our particular research areas – Gordon Sayre's Le Page du Pratz site is a good example – the sites I find particularly pedagogically aphrodisiac are those that offer the opportunity for significant student inquiry and investigation – resources expansive enough for students to roam in on long leash. Imagine the value to our field in a series of what we might call "magnet" sites – sites like Virtual Jamestown designed to cluster or accrete as much pertinent material as possible – on our major origin points: Acoma, Guanahani, Tenochtitlan, Quebec, Boston. Virtual Jamestown includes virtual panoramas and fancy FLASH presentations along with "standard" texts like court records and first-hand accounts and a gallery of White/de Bry images. Imagine, further, a series of – to change the metaphor – "sponge" sites like the Salem Witchcraft Documentary and Transcription Project designed to soak up everything pertaining to the major events in our field: the "discovery," the Pueblo Revolt, King Phillip's War, the Great Awakening, declaring independence. Salem Witchcraft has all the court records; contemporary works by such major players as the Mathers, Calef, Hale, and Willard; later shapers of meaning like Burr and Upham; as well as interactive maps that intriguingly situate the accusers and accused. Or, reversing direction and metaphor to achieve the same goal of multiple resources on which to draw, imagine the value of a series of "tentacled" sites – lean-bodied, virtually contentless – that reach out to connect in one space all the disparate individual sites that relate, say, to the major shapers of worldview in our field, like Lauric Henneton tries to do with Puritan Studies on the Web.

Collaboration

Like most teachers in the field of Early American studies, I wager, I value class discussion. I have always encouraged it, provided time for it, made it a line item in my grading budget, and worn a sad face when it doesn't happen. "Discussion and interaction with the instructor and with each other," say Bass and Eynon, "provides opportunities for students to articulate, exchange, and deepen their learning" (Bass 1998: 52). And the advent especially of discussion boards on such popular course management systems as Blackboard and WebCT now being adopted at many schools around the country open up not only new times and places for collaboration (the automatic assumption has been that discussion takes place orally in a classroom during class time) but also the "intriguing opportunity" to teach it. Interestingly, the one thing I have never done in regard to class discussion is to teach it, except perhaps in a very cursory way. But now under the impetus and aegis of the Visible Knowledge Project, I am systematically attempting to engage *every* student in my classes in *improved* discussion using this new technology. The results of my experiment

will eventually appear on my VKP Web poster with my proposal that is there now, but I can share here the main outlines of my work.

My mantra is that "the art of writing on the discussion board is to keep the conversation going." I try to get the students to think of their activity on the discussion board as if it were a game of *non-competitive* racquetball or tennis in which the goal is not to win, to defeat, to conquer, but to exercise and stretch each others' minds by keeping ideas in play for as long as possible. The racquetball/tennis analogy buys me a familiar, useful terminology for each phase of a discussion. In this "game," the students serve, return serves, field returns, and volley, and each "shot," I say, should have a conscious purpose or strategy. Once again, the goal is to avoid closure as long as possible, to suspend climax, for, though "everyone enjoys a good discussion" for its own sake, the main purpose of the discussion board in my classes is to operate as a middle space, a rehearsal space where students prepare for their individual, formal essays. It is vitally necessary, then, that the students work each other into writing shape.

So how does one "serve" in a discussion? What makes a good serve? What gets the game going? One of the things I have been experimenting with is an approach I call the "five eyes." The idea is that the students will be conscious of at least five ways to begin to look at a work we are discussing, that they practice each of these ways over the course of a semester, that they are aware that a variety of approaches in play keeps a discussion from drying up. Looking at a work with five eyes means to hypothesize, analyze, synthesize, internalize, and criticize – that is, to ask what is the author's purpose? How does he or she go about achieving that purpose? How does the work compare to other works? How does the work relate to me and my world now? Why is the work good/bad, strong/weak, important/unimportant? Each eye produces a slightly different contribution to discussion, a slightly different entry point into discussion, and, since you may have detected the influence of Bloom's taxonomy, each eye practices a different level of learning. The key thing is that since discussion board posts are permanently available for review, unlike class comments, I am able to easily model good and bad serves; have students revisit, reflect on, and, if necessary, revise their mode of serving; and even have a clearer standard for evaluating discussion board contributions.

So how does one "return" a serve? What makes a good return to someone else's discussion board post? What keeps the game going? One thing I have been experimenting with is a hierarchical list of response options. The idea is that the students will be conscious of a range of ways to add value to a conversation, that they practice this range over the course of a semester, and that they strive for a reasonable percentage of higher level responses. For instance, a student could return the serve of another by agreeing (ok), enhancing (better), or building (best). To agree is to simply repeat, reword, or summarize; to enhance is to add additional evidence or support; and to build is to take a previous point to a new level or in a new direction. Again, since discussion board posts are permanently available for review, unlike class commentary, I am easily able to model good and bad interchanges; have students identify and, if

necessary, modify their response patterns; and even have a clearer standard for evaluating discussion board work.

On it goes through thinking about "fielding" a return and then engaging in a "volley" of four or five or more interchanges. The idea is to be conscious at each step of strategies to keep the conversation, the collaboration, going. I have moved beyond simply telling students when to make how many posts, to taking significant class time to model collaboration, to expecting students to learn the vocabulary and strategies that enable conscious participation, and to setting clear expectations for the kind of contributions. Now, obviously, the "intriguing opportunity" provided by the new technology of discussion boards to up the ante on class discussion applies to all our teaching, not just in Early American studies, but let me link it to a specific situation there. After giving students an open but guided assignment in a large archive like the Jesuit Relations, for instance, what better way to process and share the disparate experiences than through collaboration on the discussion board? Even if you assign several students to the same time chunks or to the same priestly author, there will likely be as many stories about New France as there were eyes in the archive. And, as McClymer (2003a) says about his inquiry assignments, "expect [the students] to be baffled by much of what they . . . any genuine exploration requires give-and-take." The discussion board, then, is the space where the sifting and sorting preliminary to sense-making takes place.

Publication

The third "intriguing opportunity," "the use of new media technologies as virtual spaces where students publicly perform their knowledge through constructive projects" (Bass 1998: 54), is the most controversial, the most problematic, and yet, because of these very qualities, the most compelling. It also completes the continuum of new pedagogies. If we provide the opportunity for students to do primary research in archives and hone their fresh ideas in discussion, then it seems positively cruel, an act of intellectual-interruptus, to consign their final productions to the grave-like boxes outside our office doors at the end of the semester. But *publish* your student work! O my! The idea, of course, is logical and laudable: students (anybody!) will work harder and better if there is a purpose to their work beyond credentialing, if others will use their work, if they are held publicly accountable for their work. Now, there have always been ways to publish student work – from the refrigerator door at grandma's house, through the stapled class "book" in high school, to the distinguished college literary review. But the World Wide Web provides the opportunity for all students to publish like never before, on a scale like never before. Should we take advantage of that opportunity? And, if so, in what way?

Nothing ventured, nothing gained. I initiated Reel American History four years ago. I have written in detail about the project elsewhere (see the references section), so I offer only the most pertinent facts here. Reel American History most closely

resembles what Bass and Eynon call a "collaborative shared resource" (Bass 1998: 56), providing student-generated resources for the study of films about American history. I had come to a recognition that in our time films were co-creators with texts of our history, and thus, because of the shaping role that history plays in a culture, co-creators of our present and future as well. Rather than treating films as course diversions, as extra-credit options, as inferior to textual representations, I had been integrating film into the heart of my syllabi, and I maintain a list of films related to our field on the Society of Early Americanists' website. My pitch to the students in this project is to investigate the historical record and to see how the "reel" relates to the "real," how, in fact, the "reel" makes the "real." Students do in-depth, 14-part projects on each film, and at present there are case studies of 33 films on the site, a high percentage of which relate to early America: *1492: Conquest of Paradise*; *Cabeza de Vaca*; *Pocahontas*; *Plymouth Adventure*; *Black Robe*; *The Crucible*; *I, The Worst of All*; *The Last of the Mohicans*; *Daniel Boone*; and *The Last Supper*. My goal in the project is to have students employ a full range of skills, from recording facts through doing research to writing three kinds of essays, in what is basically a critical thinking exercise aimed at learning lessons about how and why history is constructed. Thirty-three examples of my student work. There for the world to see.

So I did it – am doing it, for the project continues – but *should* I be doing it? Should *you* think of this as an intriguing opportunity? The questions here are serious and severe. Is all the work worth it? Research rules the roost, and though my sense is that administrators find much media value in such visible student work, there is still the question of whether the considerable faculty effort will be equally visible at reward time. Is what they do any "good"? Can students do publishable work? We've all had the 7th-grade website pop up in our searches. Is, then, the Web just the refrigerator door writ large? The rap against the Web is that it is a vast, unfiltered, unvetted mass of material. Are we just adding to the pile? Will student work just raise the already high crap quotient on the Web? People look *at* student work, sure, but do they look *in* to it? What audience do we imagine for *student* work? My department chair's sling-shot response to RAH was to ask who will trust student work. Through such projects are we just using the Web as some sort of technified vanity press? And the Web is limitless space, but what happens if every teacher hops on this bandwagon? Do we need to clutter the Web more when already search engines are returning thousands of hits to some queries? And, God forbid, are we simply providing more and more easily obtainable fodder for plagiarists and adding to a problem of already epidemic proportion? Graduate students now *graduate* with books and articles published. Are we igniting another form of the Great Academic Speed-Up by professionalizing undergraduates? The risks are high – you will be judged by your students' work.

Whew! The litany of cautions is paralyzing. But my response to (or avoidance of) the serious objections is embodied in a second such site that I started developing in the fall 2003 seminar I mentioned above. A website on the Literature of Justification has rich possibilities. It will address the "gigantic question" Washington Irving asked in the 1809 *History of New York*: "What right had the first discoverers of America to

land, and take possession of a country, without asking the consent of its inhabitants, or yielding them an adequate compensation for their territory?" (Book I, ch. v). It will address the empty space that Wilcomb Washburn pointed to when he says: "very few have attempted to describe the justice or injustice of [colonization]. Yet significant moral and legal problems were brought to the fore by the expansion of Europe into the various parts of the world" (Washburn 1972: 15). It will remind us, in Homi Bhabha's words, of "the violence involved in establishing the nation's writ . . . [the] minus in the origin – that constitutes the *beginning* of the nation's narrative" (Bhabha 1994: 160). It will demonstrate that language is the perfect instrument of empire. O, a rich topic, indeed!

But is it the topic that explains my thrill of anticipation at the Justification project and that keeps me coming back to RAH? And if so, couldn't that thrill be satisfied in traditional ways? The topic is one reason, of course, but the overriding one, one not really elaborated in Bass and Eynon, has to do with a sense of community. Maybe it's growing older, maybe it's the state of the world, but I have discovered that community is now very, very important to me and that I have experienced its truly generative classroom power more fully in these projects than ever before – so much so that, to echo Thoreau again, I imagine a still more perfect and glorious community, not yet anywhere seen. Most often, students talk to me about "your class" (meaning *my* class), but, to cite just one example, a past RAH student recently crowed to me about how doing Web searches in a certain area continually brought her back to "*our* website." And about two thirds of the way through this semester, I quietly noted that the Literature of Justification was now "*our* project." I have had to reject about 25 percent of the RAH projects submitted, and, of those now on the site, some are frankly better than others, but all there, I know, are the best they can be because of the vigorous community ethos.

But my experience with the RAH project indicates that the sense of community operates not just to produce a touchy-feely, feel-good atmosphere that makes the work go better and faster, but, Web-enabled as it is, it has the potential to continually improve the diversity and quality of the content. First, yes, there is the impact of the community formed by the first-generation students who realize that their founding work will live on and will only be valuable if they pool their different skills and challenge each other to do their best work. Second, though, I have used these projects as texts in subsequent courses (even in some cases bringing the founders back as guest participators) and asked this second generation of students to "layer" on new material. The original projects, then, need not "freeze" either in viewpoint or in time. None of the projects are ever "finished" in the traditional sense – they live in and belong to the community – and any succeeding generation of students should think of the existing projects as bases on which to build and should think of the original authors, however distant in time, as team members whose ideas can be corroborated or, most importantly, tempered or corrected. This layering by a second, third, fourth generation – sometimes by correcting a fact, sometimes by updating a bibliography, sometimes by adding a complementary piece, or, especially, sometimes by engaging dialectically and

dialogically with a previous student's claims – is one of the very intriguing aspects of the project, one impractical before the new technology.

And the dimensions of community do not end with these two levels. Recently, I invited a first-generation alumnae, two years out, to revisit her work on the Web and, especially, to consider the layerings that a second generation had just added. She "talked" with the current students via email and a chat program, and I added her retrospective on the issues she raised in her original project to the site as yet another layer. The third level of community, then, is that of the alumnus – imagine the traditional five-year or ten-year college "reunion" as not just with fellow students over a cocktail and a football game but also with your own work from a new vantage point. The still fourth level – my Thoreauian imagining – is to engage the wider Early American community. I encourage teachers in our field everywhere to have students develop full film projects that I can add to our database or to which I can link, and, perhaps more practically, I encourage teachers everywhere to use RAH projects as texts and to have your students add layers – which can be as large as full essays or as small as paragraph comments inserted in hypertext notes on existing essays. The ability to weave student voices and viewpoints from all over the Early American ideological and geographical map seems an "intriguing opportunity" indeed.

Conclusion

Articles about teaching with technology in specific fields usually turn out to be catalogues of websites. I have chosen not to take that tack here. Remember, though, that you can find such a catalogue on the Society of Early Americanists' website, through which you can actually visit potentially useful sites faster than I could talk about them here. You will even find a list there of places to locate "best practice" sites in the wider, general American cultures field. I would rather encourage you here to think about technology in relation to the heart of your teaching, in relation to internal difference, as Emily Dickinson says, where the meanings are. I am suggesting that Bass and Eynon present a more profound approach to teaching with technology than grazing through a catalogue of sites, one that suggests that there are "intriguing opportunities" to ponder. Why, especially, should we in the field of Early American Studies – a field, frankly, that does not initially engage students as much as we would like – consider what the new technology has to offer? Because it might open up more exciting areas of investigation, more effective means of collaboration, and more powerful ways of presentation for our students. If the new technology doesn't speak to these or similar pedagogical goals, we should resist it, using our bodies as friction to clog the machine (ventriloquizing Thoreau again). But right now it seems to me that a bit of exploration, a bit of risk-taking, a bit of frontier hardiness consonant with the early American time that we study is in order. And this isn't uncharted territory. *Intentional Media*, five years old now, contains a series of thoughtful case studies, and the posters at the Visible Knowledge Project website show over a hundred substantial pedagogical experiments bubbling.

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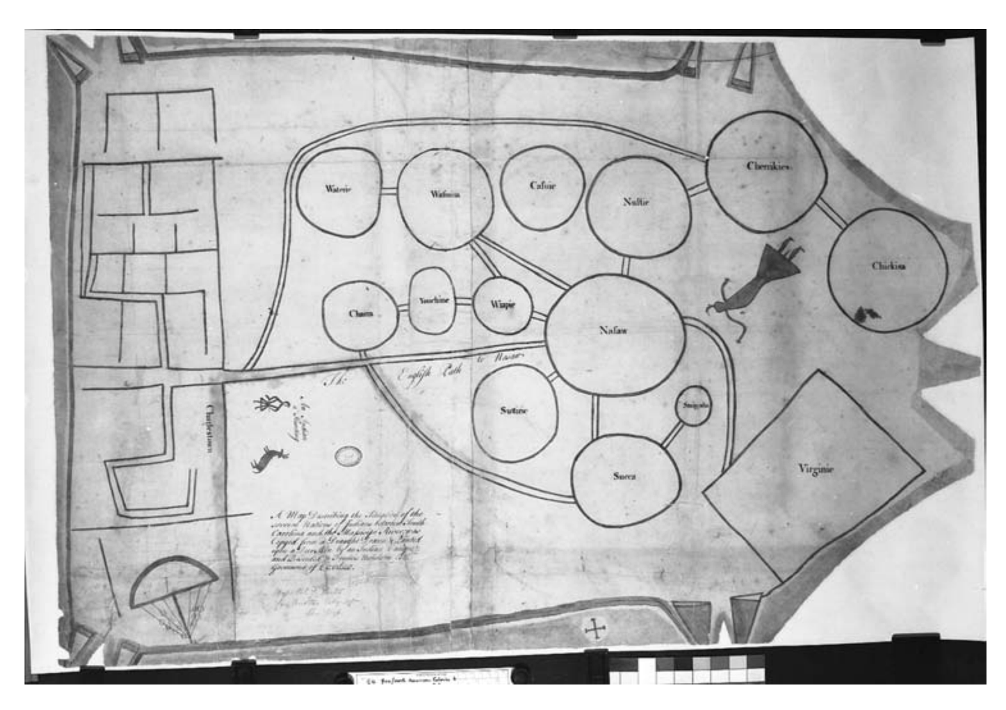
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PART TWO
New World Encounters



Catawba Indian map, originally painted on deerskin, collected by Sir Francis Nicholson, royal governor of South Carolina, who sent a copy to England, ca. 1721, which is now in the Public Record Office, Kew, London, CO 700/6 (1). This southeastern map is striking for its depiction of the European space of Charlestown (Charleston) on the left as a rectilinear grid with a boat in the harbor, and Virginia in the lower right as a rectangular shape, while the native area is a network of interconnected circles, each representing a “fire” or community bound by political and family ties.

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Recovering Precolonial American Literary History: "The Origin of Stories" and the *Popol Vuh*

Timothy B. Powell

> Language and literature involve sacred matter. Among sacred places in America, places of ancient origin and deepest mystery, there is one that comes to my mind again and again. At Barrier Canyon, Utah . . . are preserved prehistoric rock art . . . They are two thousand years old, more or less, and they remark as closely as anything can the origin of American literature. The native voice in American literature is indispensable. There is no true literary history of the United States without it, and yet it has not been clearly delineated in our scholarship. (Momaday 1997: 13–14)

This provocative passage by N. Scott Momaday, the Kiowa writer and Pulitzer Prize winner, clearly delineates the challenge of attempting to include the "native voice" in American literary history. Throughout much of the twentieth century, anthologies and critical narratives of American literature typically began with the Pilgrims landing at Plymouth Rock. Because the definition of "literature" was for so long limited to alphabetic or European forms of writing, indigenous forms were ignored by Americanists. It is only very recently that anthologies like *The Literatures of Colonial America* (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001) have begun to correct this glaring oversight. And yet, difficult questions remain unanswered. How, for example, are we to interpret the title of this anthology given that from a Native American perspective the period of "colonization" did not end in 1776 but continues to this day? Does this anthology respectfully restore Native literature to its rightful place at the beginning of American literary history, or does it simply attempt to assimilate Indians into the chronology of European occupation? Are Americanists prepared to allow Native people to define "history" in terms of their own prophetic, cyclical sense of time rather than the linear temporality of the colonizers? What place is there for non-alphabetic forms of literature which predate "discovery," a period still referred to by the problematic term "prehistoric"? In the course of answering these perplexing questions, this analysis will

argue that careful consideration of early, non-alphabetic, Native forms will help to move the field of American literature beyond the persistent legacy of Eurocentrism.

The four Native cultures represented in the opening section of *The Literatures of Colonial America* – Maya, Acoma, Seneca/Iroquois, and Winnebego – all have deeply rooted traditions that extend back well before the first European colonizers set foot on the continents. It is important to remember, however, that these four groups represent only a tiny fraction of the more than six hundred distinct tribal cultures that make up what we now call "Native America." Rather than skimming quickly over the complicated cultural histories of all four of these tribes, I will concentrate here primarily on two texts: the Quiché Maya *Popol Vuh*, one of the undisputed masterpieces of the Mesoamerican tradition, and "The Origin of Stories," a fine example of the rich oral history of the Seneca, one of the five original tribes that created the Iroquois Confederation. These two works provide a sense of the geographical and cultural diversity that exists within Native America – the Maya being a culture that has long possessed writing from what is now Central America and the Iroquois being a culture that was primarily oral from what is now the northeastern United States. By delving more deeply into the historical and social contexts of these two relatively brief works (the selection from the *Popol Vuh* is an excerpt of a much longer text), I hope to encourage the continued exploration of the vast array of pre-Columbian Native sources, many of which remain relatively unknown to Americanists.

The primary goal of this essay, therefore, is to open up what I am calling the precolonial period of American literary history. To do so will require confronting some of the persistent blind spots that continue to limit scholarly understanding of Native American culture. Too many anthologies, for example, still contain sentences such as this one from the *Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 6th edition – "we have no actual records that predate 1492" (Baym 2003: 6) – which sadly distort the history of written and oral expression on these continents. While it is technically true that the term "literature" derives from the Latin *littera* or "letter," this Eurocentric definition does not work well in the context of the Americas. This essay will work self-consciously to expand the spatial, temporal, and formal borders of "American literature" by studying precolonial Native literature from across the continent in the form of storytelling, painted codices, hieroglyphic texts, and rock art.

To recover a precolonial sense of memory will, however, require careful attention to the Native American worldview. As Donald Fixico has observed, those "who study Indian history must think in terms of culture, community, environment, and metaphysics" (Fixico 1998: 87). To do so, it is first necessary to acknowledge that "Indian history" extends well beyond the temporal borders of "colonial America." The Maya, for example, developed a highly sophisticated system of writing to record history, myth, and calendrical calculations as early as 100 CE. And yet, to speak about the Maya written tradition beginning in the "year 100 CE" implicitly imposes the chronological time frame of the colonizer onto a Native American sense of "history." Thinking beyond the parameters of colonialism will therefore require a leap of the critical imagination for non-Natives who hope to understand these stories from an Indian

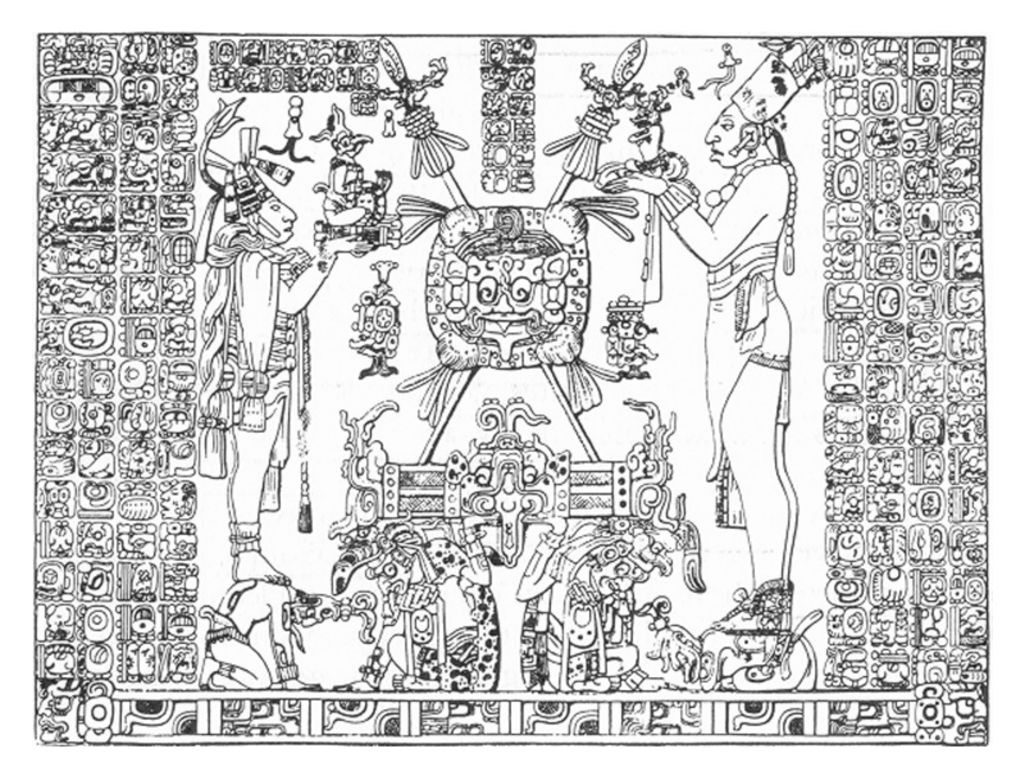


FIGURE 8.1 Panel from the Maya Temple of the Sun-Eyed Shield at Palenque (ca. 690 CE). Dennis Tedlock has translated the first seven glyphs in the left hand column to read: "Since the present world began on August 11, 3114 BC, 275,466 days had passed and it was now October 23, 2360 BC." The history recounted on the panel commemorates the accession of Sun-Eyed Jaguar, shown at age 7 on left and at age 49 on right, to the Egret Lordship (Tedlock 2001: 45).

point of view. In the case of the Maya, it would be more accurate to state that "history" is recorded in relation to a cyclical calendar which integrates the distant past, the present, and future prophecies in relation to detailed observations of the stars and planets. As an exercise in stretching our collective imagination here at the outset, reflect on the fact that the Maya did not see their history beginning in 100 but on the date 13.0.0.0.0 4 Ahau 8 Cumku or, to translate back into the terms of a Western calendar, August 11, 3114 BCE! The challenge, then, is to think outside the framework of European colonization and chronology. In doing so, this essay will work to redefine the central terms – "American," "literature," and "history" – from a Native American perspective.

Native Americans' Conflicted Place in the Canon

Native American culture is the oldest on the continent, yet it is only very recently that it has been acknowledged as part of American literary history. To put this in

context, the first edition of *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* (1979), which is often cited as a benchmark of the field, did not include one Native American author in its almost five thousand pages. It was not until 1994 that Native American literature appeared in volume one of the Norton. And it was not until 2003 that the *Norton Anthology* finally placed the Native American oral tradition in its rightful place at the beginning of the first volume. Sadly, no examples of precolonial writing have yet been included. It is well worth reviewing, then, the social and academic battles that are still being fought in order to bring Native American literature into the canon. Having reviewed this struggle, I will then turn to the complicated question of how to situate Native writers in relation to the "American" literary tradition. My point here is that rather than assimilating Native American tradition into a Eurocentric definition of "literature," critics (and students) need to formulate new methods of reading these oral and non-alphabetic texts. To do so, it will be imperative to listen carefully to the concerns that have been voiced by Native scholars.

Many undergraduates, sadly, are unaware of the courageous efforts of an earlier generation of students, teachers, and activists who successfully changed the curriculum and hiring practices of the academy to make a place for Native American, African American, Latino/a, Asian American, and Women's and Gender studies. This period, which began in approximately 1969 and continues through today, constitutes a cultural revolution of sorts. The early years of this movement were an exhilarating, often dangerous, time. In 1969, for example, students at San Francisco State clashed with police and the college administration in a protracted battle – students went out on strike for five months – in order to pressure the college president to create the nation's first ethnic studies program (Umemoto 1989: 3). That same year, Native American students and activists took control of Alcatraz Island for 19 months in order protest, among other issues, the lack of educational facilities and programs for and about Native Americans (Smith and Warrior 1996: 28–30). Such scenes played out on college campuses all across the country in a remarkably successful example of political activism. By 1992, 700 African American, Asian American, Latino, and Native American studies programs had been established (La Belle and Ward 1996: 73). And while this represents meaningful change, there is still a long way to go – Native Americans, for example, represent less than half of 1 percent of all faculty in higher education (US Department of Education).

The creation of ethnic studies programs across the country had a profound effect both on the curriculum and critical narratives of American literary history. One of the most meaningful changes was in the ethnic composition of the canon, which can be understood as the essential works of literature that define "American" identity. Beginning with N. Scott Momaday winning the Pulitzer Prize in 1969 for *House Made of Dawn*, a new generation of ethnic writers – Toni Morrison, Derek Walcott, Maxine Hong Kingston, Gloria Anzaldúa, Leslie Marmon Silko, Rodolfo Anaya, David Henry Hwang, to name just a few – fundamentally transformed the canon of American literature. Analogously, as the curriculum changed, the students and faculty of America's universities became more diverse, changing the face of the academy.

Although it is impossible to list all the scholars who helped bring about these profound transformations, it is important to name just a few: Ameríco Paredes' *"With His Pistol in His Hand": A Border Ballad and Its Hero* (1958), Vine Deloria, Jr.'s *Custer Died for Your Sins* (1970), Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga's *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981), Elaine H. Kim's *Asian American Literature* (1982), Houston A. Baker, Jr.'s *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature* (1984). These writers and academics utterly transformed the field by arguing convincingly that African American, Native American, Asian American, Latino, Gay and Lesbian, Disability, and Women's cultures were centrally important to "American" identity.

Diversifying the canon, however, has produced some unforeseen complications. While changing the complexion of the student body, the faculty, and the curriculum constitutes a meaningful step forward, the sheer multiplicity of cultures that now define American studies has destabilized the field's central focus. In other words, back when anthologies began with the Puritans, the definition of "America" was clearer: a vision of "a city upon a hill" articulated by John Winthrop and William Bradford. With the advent of multiculturalism, however, it has become ever more complicated to explain what the "New World" meant to Spanish, French, British, Portuguese, and Dutch colonizers, not to mention African slaves or Indians who, of course, did not see the land as "new" at all. By devoting far greater attention to the multiplicity of cultures which historically flourished in North and South America, scholars have profoundly altered the way we understand the geography of identity. Throughout the 1990s, scholars of African American, Native American, Latino/a, and Asian American studies developed a new approach called transnationalism, or the study of how cultural identity transcends national borders. Paul Gilroy, for example, called on African American studies scholars to abandon "a nationalistic focus" and to concentrate instead on "the transcultural, international formation I call the black Atlantic" (Gilroy 1993: 4). José David Saldívar's *Border Matters* (1997) taught scholars "how to reimagine the nation as a site with many 'cognitive maps'" so that "American studies" is not necessarily equated with the United States but is "remapped" in hemispheric terms (ibid: ix). At the same time, Rey Chow eloquently articulated "the goal of 'writing diaspora,'" which encouraged scholars to think about the historical complexities of "Chineseness" in ways that go well beyond the notion of "identity based on national unity" (Chow 1993: 25, 24) – shifting the geographic focus away from nation-states (China or the US) towards transnational spaces that included Chinese communities living in Hong Kong, the Philippines, Honolulu, Vancouver, San Francisco, and Lima, Peru. And while transnational scholarship has productively complicated our understanding of cultural identity's intricacies, it also raises difficult questions about whether these cultures consider themselves to be "American," given that many of them were historically excluded from US citizenship.

This is particularly perplexing when it comes to understanding the relationship between Native American culture and American identity. On the one hand, arguing for the inclusion of Native Americans in the canon has important political ramifications – creating a more democratic and historically accurate understanding of the

cultural diversity which has characterized life on these continents since time immemorial. And yet, on the other hand, we cannot talk about the virtues of "historical accuracy" without acknowledging that, from a Native perspective, "inclusion" has historically come at a terrible price. In 1887, for example, the Dawes Act offered Native Americans US citizenship in exchange for giving up tribal ownership of their land, a policy which ultimately led to the loss of 60 million acres of native land (Foner and Garrity 1991: 268). Soon after, the federal government implemented a reform movement of forced assimilation overseen by men like Richard Henry Pratt, the head of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, whose stated policy was to "Kill the Indian and save the man!" (Warrior 1995: 6). Finally, before we can begin to address the question of how Native American literature fits into an anthology focusing on "Colonial America," it is imperative to acknowledge the painful and violent history of colonization: as Leslie Marmon Silko puts it at the outset of her novel *Almanac of the Dead*, "Sixty million Native Americans died between 1500 and 1600. The defiance and resistance to things European continue unabated" (Silko 1991: 15).

It is important, therefore, to proceed carefully when considering the implications of what it means to start *The Literatures of Colonial America* with a section entitled "Before Columbus: Native American Cultures." The Creek scholar Craig Womack offers a meaningful insight into the troubling issues that arise when trying to map the volatile fault line where the canons of American literature and Native American literature intersect, collide, conflict, and separate:

> I say that tribal literatures are not some branch waiting to be grafted onto the main trunk. Tribal literatures are the tree, the oldest literatures in the Americas, the most American of American literatures. We are the canon . . . (Understand that this is not an argument for inclusion – I am saying this with all the bias I can muster that our American canon, the Native literary canon of the Americas, predates their American canon. I see them as two separate canons). (Womack 1999: 7)

The reservations expressed by Womack and other Native scholars suggest that simply assimilating American Indian literature will not suffice. Bringing these two distinct traditions together requires a recognition that there is not *one* canon – dominated by Franklin, Emerson, and Faulkner – into which Native American literature must somehow fit. Rather, Womack's distinction between "our American canon" and "their American canon" suggests that Native literature should be studied in relation to its own distinct cultural heritage, so that N. Scott Momaday is vetted not by comparing him to Ernest Hemingway but by understanding how *House Made of Dawn* draws on the Navajo epic *Diné Bahanè*, which begins in mythic time with the earth's creation. While both traditions can be called "American" in the sense that they occupy the same geographical space, the fact that the Native American literary tradition existed for millennia before white contact makes it necessary to study this tradition on its own unique terms. "Native people have been on this continent at least thirty thousand years," Womack writes, "and the stories tell us we have been here even

longer than that . . . that we originated here. For much of this time period, we have had literatures" (Womack 1999: 7). Another important reason that the two canons should remain distinct, albeit inextricably intertwined, is because the Native American conception of "history," as we will see, functions entirely differently from that of colonial chronology.

Perhaps the most important aspect of studying Native American literature is a healthy respect for what the Osage literary critic Robert Warrior calls "intellectual sovereignty". Warrior argues against "assimilating and enculturating non-Native values" in favor of a new form of "American Indian intellectual discourse" that "ground[s] itself in its own history" (Warrior 1995: 2). In contrast to prior conceptions of the American canon, I will argue here for a new paradigm, the canon(s) of American literature, which acknowledges the multiplicity of cultures occupying the same land and grants each culture the intellectual sovereignty to define their literary tradition on their own terms. In the case of Native Americans, as Womack implies, "America" is not limited to the political entity of the United States but becomes associated with the land itself, hemispheric in scope – an idea which Rodrigo Lazo explores more fully in his essay in this volume. Like José David Saldívar, I am suggesting that the field be defined by a multiplicity of "cognitive maps." What I propose is a new understanding of literary geography that defines "America" not along national borderlines but according to canonical storylines – a map made out of narratives which is not only *transnational* but also *transtemporal* in scope.

This analysis will produce a new set of spatiotemporal coordinates that extend well beyond the discursive boundaries of European colonialism. It is important to recognize that this approach has not been limited to Native American studies. Wai Chee Dimock's recent work on what she calls "deep time," for example, offers a valuable critique from within American studies. Dimock argues that her approach "produces a map that, thanks to its receding horizons, its backward extension into far-flung temporal and spatial coordinates, must depart significantly from a map predicated on the short life of the US" (Dimock 2001: 759). It may also be interesting for readers to compare this approach with Ralph Bauer's essay in this collection. Working in dialogic relation to these theorists, my intent is to trace the storylines of the Maya *Popol Vuh* and the Seneca "Origin of Stories" backwards through time and across space in order to construct a new definition of Native American literary history whose origins predate European conquest by hundreds of years.

"The Origin of Stories"

"The Origin of Stories" provides an exemplary opportunity for studying precolonial Native American literature, offering a meaningful insight into the extraordinary depth of the Iroquois oral tradition and the redemptive powers that these very old stories possess. To look back into the vast temporal expanse of precolonial Native

American literary history requires learning to think according to a very different set of cultural standards. In order to grasp the subtle but profound lessons of this deceptively short tale, it is extremely important to understand that we are encountering a sense of "history" here that differs sharply from the chronological temporality which governs the rest of *The Literatures of Colonial America*. Notice, for example, that all of the other sections of the anthology are organized according to a linear logic, whereby the order of the authors is determined by their date of birth. In "Before Columbus: Native American Cultures," however, there are no authors listed, no dates given. As we will see, it is exceedingly difficult to establish a correspondence between the events in the stories and the chronological time frame that the dominant white culture ordinarily associates with "history."

Perhaps it is best to begin, then, by abandoning the linear logic of colonial temporality, embracing instead a non-linear approach that will lead us back to "the lore of former times" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 17). What I propose is a critical narrative that begins in the present and moves into the precolonial period, using "The Origin of Stories" as a kind of literary map. By following the storyline backwards through Seneca history, a new critical narrative will emerge that establishes a point of temporal origin very different from the one cited in the anthology's bibliography, which states that "The Origin of Stories" comes from a collection edited by Arthur C. Parker entitled *Seneca Myths and Folktales*, published in 1989. Parker, who had Seneca blood but was not an enrolled member of the tribe (although he was later adopted into the Bear Clan of the Seneca), collected this particular story in 1903. The tale was told to him in the Seneca dialect by a Găkăă, or storyteller, living in an upstate New York village that the Seneca had occupied for hundreds of years (Fenton 1989: xi–xv). And yet, as we will see, internal evidence from "The Origin of Stories" suggests that the events in the tale date back far earlier than 1903, when it was first recorded in alphabetic form.

Despite the story's familiar format, neatly framed by the margins of the white page, students need to be aware of the transformations, translations, and cultural shifts that inevitably distort the Seneca oral tradition. Originally, the tale would have been performed in the intimate confines of a longhouse, surrounded by extended family, during the long winter months. According to Parker, the Seneca followed this ritual because, during the season of hibernation, "no animal should become offended by man's boasting of triumph over beasts" and because "to listen to stories in summer made people lazy . . . All the world stops work when a good story is told" (Parker 1989: xxxii). And while it may be impossible to recreate this setting in an anthology, any attempt to interpret the story must begin by acknowledging what has been lost.

N. Scott Momaday's remarkable essay "The Arrowmaker" provides a helpful commentary for better understanding the oral tradition. Until very recently, Momaday notes, the Native American oral tradition "has been the private possession of a few, a tenuous link in that most ancient chain of language." Because "the tradition itself . . . has always been but one generation removed from extinction . . . our sense of the verbal dimension is very keen, and we are aware of something in the nature of language that is at once perilous and compelling" (Momaday 1997: 10). In a sense, a great deal has been

lost by reading "The Origin of Stories" in written form, for students and teachers invariably miss out on the messages a good storyteller conveys beyond mere words– the electric rush of excitement and responsibility one feels when linked by the oral performance to "that most ancient chain of language." On the other hand, the addition of Native American stories to this anthology represents an important opportunity to deepen our collective memory beyond the temporal borders of the nation-state and to create greater respect for the original occupants of these continents.

In order to plumb the depths of Iroquois memory, it may prove helpful to abandon the familiar time frame of the Gregorian calendar and to consider how historical memory works within "The Origin of Stories." This evocative Seneca tale – a story about the power of storytelling – functions as a literary compass, pointing towards an elusive moment of origin identified in the story as "the old days." Whereas a historian would be interested in assigning a chronological date to the culture identified as "the old-time people" in the story, or might even question the historical accuracy of this source because of its mythical qualities, I want to argue here for a literary history that fully accepts the Seneca view of "stories that came forth from the rock" to edify a young orphan, who marries the rock's granddaughter. Like all orally transmitted stories, this tale undoubtedly has many variant versions with multiple meanings. At one point, the tale refers to the cliff as a "standing rock," which may refer to the Oneida, who were known by "the national name of 'Standing Rock' " (Fenton 1989: 62). Given the focus of this section of the anthology – mapping the discursive terrain "Before Columbus" – I will focus here on interpreting the talking cliff as a mythical medium that transmits the "lore of former times."

To locate the "origin of stories" requires a form of literary archeology in which the many layers of storytelling here are studied carefully, both individually and in relation to one another. The first layer, less obvious than the others, always takes place in the immediate present, as the reader opens the book and imperfectly experiences Seneca oral tradition. Given the absence of a Seneca Găkää̆, the storyteller here can perhaps be thought of as the literary character "Gaqka, or Crow," an orphan who sets off on a vision quest to give his life meaning (Fenton 1989: ixx). The second stratum, far more clear, becomes evident at the end of the tale when Gaqka, his scars healed and his family ties restored, returns to his village to relate the many stories he learned on his journey. The origin of these stories can be traced back to a deeper, mythological layer of the tale in which these stories were told to him by both the standing rock and his granddaughter, Gaqka's bride. The standing rock does not, however, constitute the original source of the stories. For, as the tale clearly specifies, "the rock spoke and began to relate wonder stories of things that happened in the old days." These "wonder stories" are among the oldest in tribal memory. It is significant, I believe, that they are told here by the land itself, rather than a member of the Seneca tribe. For the tale implicitly suggests that there exists an even deeper layer of storytelling, which perhaps predates the culture we now know as "Seneca."

Difficulties abound, of course, in attempting to assign a historical date to when "the rock spoke" or the "wonder stories" it related. Before turning to the

Iroquois sources, it is informative to study how Western scholars handle the problem of precolonial Seneca history. Although Native peoples have occupied the Iroquois homeland for thousands of years, anthropologist Dean R. Snow notes that "many modern students of the Northern Iroquians are reluctant to use national terms like 'Seneca' or 'Mohawk' for periods prior to AD 1500" (Snow 1994: 11) This date is associated with the creation of the *Haudenosaunee* (meaning, literally, "the whole house" or, metaphorically, the five national fires that made up the Great League of Peace and Power). The origin of the *Haudenosaunee* can be traced back to a story, known as the Deganawida epic, which recounts how the historical figures of Hiawatha (Ayonhwathah) and the Peacemaker (Deganawida) bring together the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, and Seneca to form the Iroquois Confederation (the Tuscarora would later come to be the sixth nation to join the Confederation) (Snow 1994: 58–9). Daniel Richter, a very fine historian of the Iroquois with a healthy respect for the power of stories, writes that "the isolation of warring communities was apparently one factor that caused an originally common proto-Iroquois speech to develop after AD 1000 into the distinct languages of Mohawk, Oneidas, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, Susquehannock, and perhaps several others" (Richter 1992: 15). For anthropologists and historians, "Seneca" identity is thus predicated on the development of a distinct dialect and culture, the period before this being "proto-Iroquoian." "The Origin of Stories," on the other hand, seems to suggest a much deeper form of collective memory, which can be traced back to the "old-time people."

It is informative to compare "The Origin of Stories" to another Iroquoian account by the Tuscaroran historian David Cusick, whose *Sketches of Ancient History of the Six Nations* (1848) delineates the profound depths of tribal memory. Writing in a hybrid style that blends Western calendrical dates with Iroquoian history, Cusick traces the origins of the five nations. "Perhaps about 1,250 years before Columbus discovered America [ca. 250] and about fifty winters since the people left the mountain," Cusick writes, "the five families became numerous and extended their settlements, as the country had been exposed to the invasion of monsters" (p. 22). As Arnold Krupat has recently argued in *Red Matters* (2002), the presence of "monsters" in Native accounts too often leads such documents to be dismissed as "myth" or as "historically inaccurate." "The history of America," Krupat insists, "must no longer be written without a recognition that there are histories of America . . . Regardless of the presence or absence of factual accuracy in some Native histories, these narratives nonetheless have every legitimate claim to be taken as 'real history' " (Krupat 2002: 74–5; my emphasis). My point, then, is not that Cusick's historical dates are factually accurate, but that the depth of memory in his narrative provides a sense of scale that perhaps helps to locate the "origin" of the story.

Taking the Iroquois' intellectual sovereignty seriously, I want to connect a moment from very early in Cusick's *Ancient History* to the standing rock layer of storytelling in "The Origin of Stories." Writing about primordial history, when animals and humans were first formed, Cusick notes that this period comes down to later generations in

the form of rock art: "The good mind now accomplishes the works of creation . . . and [the bad mind] attempted to enclose all the animals of game in the earth, so as to deprive them from mankind; but the good mind released them . . . (the animals were dispersed, and traces of them were made on the rocks near the cave where it was closed)" (Cusick 1848: 14). This rock art, like the "wonder stories" of the "old-time people" told by the cliff, suggests an earlier period of tribal history (referred to in the tale as "former times") whose origins lie in deepest antiquity.

As N. Scott Momaday observes in the opening quotation to this essay, scholars of American literature need to find ways to interpret the stories encoded in rock art or, in this case, related by cliffs, if we are to extend the temporal borders of the field to include precolonial Native texts. I believe that this can be accomplished by studying what I am calling the *transtemporal* aspects of these texts or the way that Native American literature transcends Western conceptions of periodization to integrate moments separated by vast periods of time. More specifically, both Cusick's history and "The Origin of Stories" seem to connect what anthropologists or historians term "proto-Iroquoian" cultures with contemporary tribal memory. These two versions of Iroquoian history appear to establish a link between the Seneca and the ancient cultures that occupied the same land. Furthermore, this connection to deep antiquity becomes associated with a redemptive form of healing, clearly seen here by the fact that the standing rock's "wonder stories" work to help cure Gaqka's scars, both physical (wounds to his body) and spiritual (the wounds of being cut off from his tribe).

This metaphor of curing also provides a meaningful insight into gender roles in Iroquoian society. Part of Gaqka's "wound" is the fact that he is not linked to any *ohwachir*a or lineage traced through the female line. This tradition originates with the primordial myth of Sky Woman, who descended from the heavens to give birth to the Iroquois people (Snow 1994: 2–5). In stark contrast to their counterparts in colonial European culture, Iroquois women were dominant figures morally, economically, and also politically (Richter 1992: 20). This power is evident in that Gaqka asks his bride's mother, the head of the family, for permission to marry. The standing rock's granddaughter, furthermore, plays a fundamental role in Gaqka's healing. Note, for example, that it is the power of the granddaughter's stories, coupled with the older stories told by the standing rock, which "removes all the scars from [his] face and body."

If we take seriously the idea that stories are extremely powerful artifacts that can establish meaningful connections between different cultures occupying the same land, then perhaps "The Origin of Stories" offers a sense of hope that non-Native readers might learn to see a deeper connection to the continent and the cultures that have occupied it since time immemorial. This bond should not, of course, erase the painful awareness of the horrific violence that led to European cultures taking possession of the Americas. Like Craig Womack and Robert Warrior, I am not saying that Native cultures should be assimilated into "American literature," but rather that we need to theorize a far more complicated understanding of American literary history which

recognizes the primacy of the Native canon. This acknowledgment of multiple canons, in turn, allows us to interpret this story not by comparing it to William Bradford or Bartolomé de Las Casas, but in relation to traditional Indian literature which takes the form of oral traditions, wampum, mythological history, and rock art. The Native American canon, however, is also clearly linked to other traditions – French, Spanish, British, and African American – through their shared (albeit contentious) relationship to the land, all of which together delineates what might be called the literary geography of America. And while the history of these cultural collisions was often tragically violent, I want to call attention to the redemptive power that this story embodies. Within the narrative framework of the tale, the stories that Gaqka receives from the rock transform him from an orphaned outcast into a respected member of the tribe. Analogously, I want to suggest that this powerful Seneca story about establishing bonds between temporally distant cultures and about healing old social wounds can help to mend the break between "American" and "Native American" literatures.

The *Popol Vuh*

Whereas "The Origin of Stories" provides a sense of the ancient and complex nature of Native American oral traditions, the Maya text known as the *Popol Vuh* (or "Council Book") offers a critical insight into the long history of Native American writing on these continents. As Elizabeth Hill Boone notes in *Writing Without Words*, most scholars are still confined by a narrow definition of "writing" which only recognizes the legitimacy of "alphabetic writing, normally referring to one of the modern alphabetic scripts" (Boone 1994: 3). Boone argues for a more inclusive paradigm that fully acknowledges the diverse scribal forms of Mesoamerica by defining writing as "the communication of relatively specific ideas in a conventional manner by means of permanent marks" (ibid: 15). This shift is exceedingly important in terms of rethinking the space and time of American literature, for as Joyce Marcus points out in *Mesoamerican Writing Systems*, the hieroglyphic tradition can be traced back to two stelae at Monte Albán from 500–300 BCE (Marcus 1992: 41). The challenge of recovering precolonial Native American literature is, therefore, formidable given that Americanists need to begin by filling in the two thousand year gap between the origins of Mesoamerican writing and the arrival of Europeans on the continents. The *Popol Vuh* provides a helpful starting point for this difficult critical endeavor. For although the alphabetic version of the text was inscribed by a Spanish friar sometime around 1703, it is possible to trace the history of the book much further back into Mesoamerican literary history

Like "The Origin of Stories," the *Popol Vuh* contains many layers of history. While the alphabetic text was written down during the period of Spanish colonization, many of the events in the second half of the book can be traced back to the early postclassic period (900–1200), while events in the opening section take place in mythological

time. Although it is correct to identify the work as Maya, it is equally important to note that many other cultures have indirectly shaped the text. The excerpt included in *The Literatures of Colonial America* from the opening of the *Popol Vuh*, for example, demonstrates how the Christian and Maya origin myths intertwine. This mixing of cultures is not, however, confined to the Spanish era. To provide a sense of this cultural syncretism in both the colonial and precolonial periods, I will focus on two characters in particular from the opening section: the Heart of Heaven, influenced by the Christian conception of the holy trinity, and Gucumatz, the Quiché incarnation of the Plumed Serpent, a figure which can be traced back into the deepest parts of Mesoamerican memory.

Of all the Mesoamerican written works in this fecund tradition, the *Popol Vuh* garners the greatest respect. This is due in part to the magnificence of Maya culture – the ruins of Palenque, for example, with its towering pyramids and intricate hieroglyphic texts, stand in silent testimony to the majesty of classical Maya architecture from 200 to 900. The precolonial Maya legacy ranges from Chichén Itzá in the Yucatán peninsula, to Palenque in the Chiapas region of what is now southern Mexico, to Tikal in the rainforests of Guatemala, to Copán in the mountains of Honduras where the culture still thrives – there are today more than 4 million Maya in Guatemala, a significant number of whom still practice ancient forms of calendrical prophecy (Tedlock 1982: xiii). The distinguished reputation of the *Popol Vuh* also stems from its literary and historical quality. Spanning the period from the dawn of time to Spanish colonization, this Mesoamerican masterpiece contains a wide array of material, from a mythological journey through the underworld, to a detailed account of postclassic history, to a genealogy of Quiché Maya kings spanning almost half a millennium. Adrián Recinos fittingly describes the poetic style of the *Popol Vuh* as possessing "the beauty of a novel and the austerity of history" (Recinos 1991: 75).

The English translation included in *The Literatures of Colonial America* derives from a copy of the *Popol Vuh* made by a Dominican friar, Father Francisco Ximénez, between 1701 and 1703 in Chichicastenango, built on the ancient town of Quiché. Ximénez copied and translated an older text, written in an alphabetic form of Quiché Maya by an unnamed Indian between 1554 and 1558 (this older copy has been lost). There is no doubt, however, that this earlier version was based on much older, precolonial copies of the *Popol Vuh* that were obviously not written in the alphabet of the colonizer but inscribed in the Maya tradition of codices, which included painted pictures and hieroglyphs accompanied by stories passed down through the oral tradition (Tedlock 1985: 25–30). (See fig. 8.2 for an example of a painted codex).

To locate the "origin of stories" for the *Popol Vuh*, however, entails passing through a wall of fire known as the Spanish conquest. In 1524, Pedro de Alvarado conquered the Quiché, seizing their kings and executing them before a terrorized nation. Alvarado, in a letter to Hernán Cortés, wrote that "for the good and peace of this land, I burned them and ordered the city burned and leveled to the ground" (Recinos 1991: 4). On the other side of this cultural genocide, however, lies the

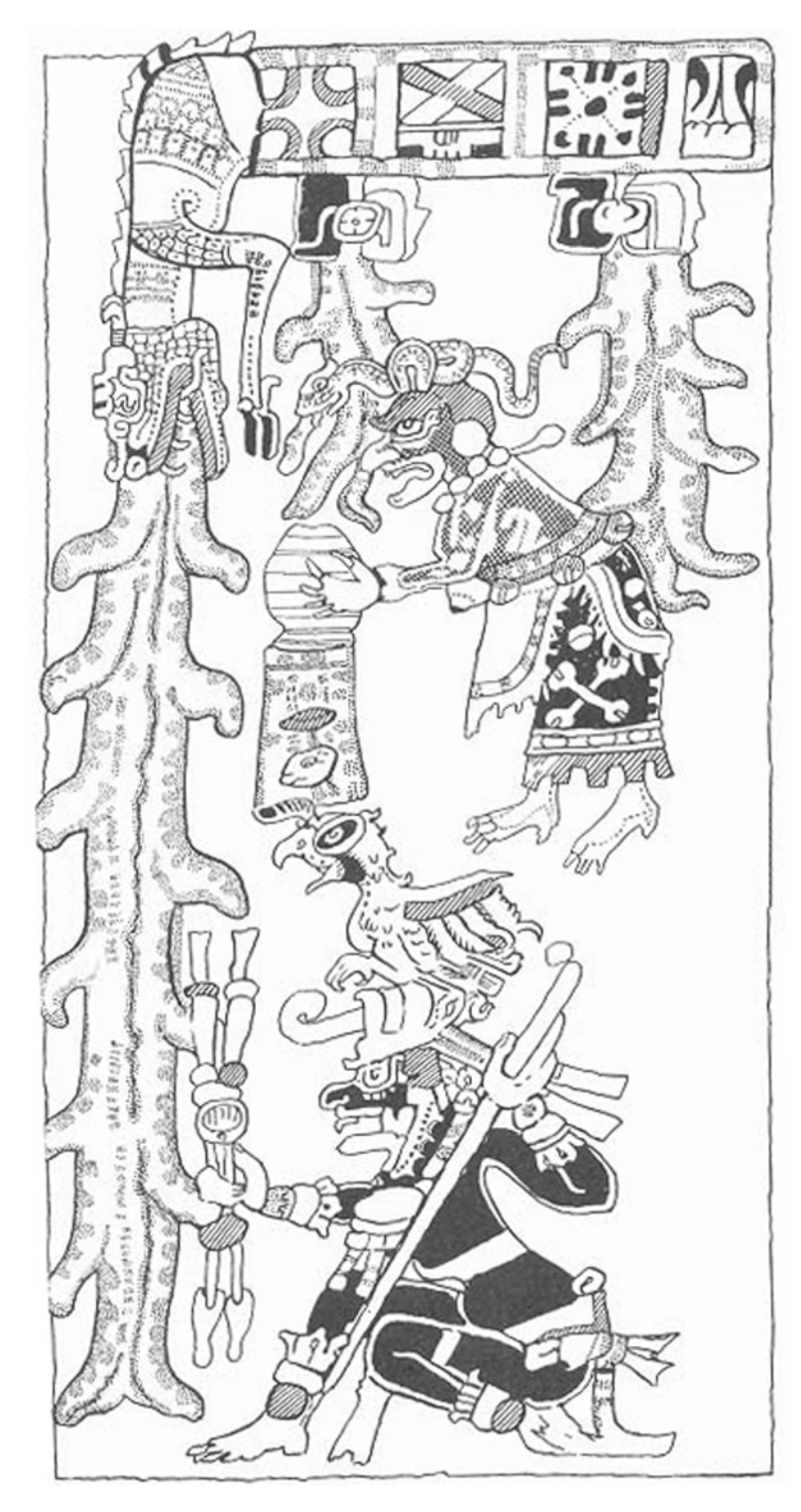


FIGURE 8.2 A scene from the Dresden Codex, a precolonial Maya painted book from the early thirteenth century, depicting a deluge of water streaming from the open jaws of a serpent in what has been interpreted as an apocalyptic image of the end of the world (Sharer 1994: 520–1).

wondrous history of precolonial Maya culture. Since it is virtually impossible to locate a distinct point of origin for the *Popol Vuh*, I want to begin with a passage from the opening of the narrative which functions as a kind of literary lens that will allow us to see back into the distant past of Mesoamerica. Dennis Tedlock, in a fuller and more detailed translation of the opening section, includes the sentence (written presumably by the unnamed Maya author who inscribed the 1554–8 copy): "There is the original book and ancient writing, but the one who reads and assesses it has a hidden identity. It takes a long performance and account to complete the lighting of all the sky-earth" (Tedlock 1985: 63). The existence of such "ancient writing" has been widely documented. The bishop of Chiapas, Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas, wrote in his *Apologética Historia de las Indias* about how the Indians formed "their large books with such keen and subtle skills that we might say our writings were not an improvement over theirs" (Recinos 1991: 8). In the 1550s, Alonso de Zorita visited Las Casas and wrote that he learned about the Quiché political system from "paintings they had of their ancient times, of more than 800 years and from accounts of very old people" (Recinos 1991: 12). As Tedlock's translation suggests, the history of the Quiché's "ancient times" was preserved in the form of an "original book" or painted codex that would have been accompanied by a "long performance" passed down through the oral tradition.

It is important to understand, then, that when the alphabetic version of the *Popol Vuh* was written down in 1554–8, it represented the crossing of two very old and powerful cultures – for the Maya, at that point, had been writing their own history for more than a thousand years. The brief excerpt in *The Literatures of Colonial America* (the full translation is more than 130 pages long) offers an important opportunity to study the cultural syncretism of the Maya, both at the moment of colonization and five hundred years earlier during the postclassic period. The influence of Christianity can be seen in a line like "Let there be light," which is obviously borrowed from Genesis. The character called the Heart of Heaven, who is present at the moment of creation (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 20), clearly represents a Maya translation of the holy trinity: "The first is called Caculhá. The second is Chipi-Caculhá. The third is Raxa-Caculhá. And these three are the Heart of Heaven" (ibid). The colonial influence in the opening chapter of the *Popol Vuh* has led some commentators to dismiss this section as inauthentic. The respected nineteenth-century ethnologist Adolf Bandelier wrote, for example, "It appears to be, for the first chapter, an evident fabrication or, at least, accommodation of the Indian mythology to Christian notions, a pious fraud"; Bandelier goes on to praise the rest of the manuscript as "the most valuable work for the aboriginal history and ethnology of Central America" (Recinos 1991: 19).

The volatile question of missionary influence and the enduring presence of Christianity in Native American life must be approached carefully. On the one hand, as Jace Weaver points out, "In the process by which Natives were dispossessed, Christian missionaries were often no less culpable than those wielding rifle or plow." And yet, as Weaver goes on to observe, it would be a mistake to see Native communities as merely passive victims rather than dynamic participants in "a living faith." "Native Christians," Weaver concludes, "give authority to scripture specifically because it resonates with their experi-

ence . . . They recognize Mary, the mother of Jesus, because she is la Virgen de Guadalupe, or White Buffalo Calf Woman, or Corn Mother, or La Llorona refusing to be consoled at the death of her child" (Weaver 1998: 3, 19). In the case of the Maya, they adapted to the violence of the Spanish Inquisition by incorporating elements of the colonizers' religion, without necessarily giving up older traditions. As Robert Sharer observes, "Maya beliefs and rituals often went underground . . . Although baptized and thus officially 'converted,' many Maya . . . could 'accommodate' their conquerors by seeming to accept the Christian concepts, all the while maintaining their old beliefs under a new guise." The Maya, Sharer continues, "had long worshiped the image of the cross as a symbol for 'the tree of life,' the sacred ceiba supporting the heavens" and therefore "could readily accept the Christian cross, though they often worshiped it for its ancient Maya connotation" (Sharer 1994: 518). It would be inaccurate, however, to see Christianity as nothing more than a veneer. Since the sixteenth century, the two religions have become so inextricably intertwined in Maya society that to separate them would be to oversimplify and to distort the historical reality of how cultures collide, conflict, and coalesce.

It is important, therefore, to resist the academic desire to recover a "pure" essence of Native American identity as it existed before Alvarado, Cartier, and the Pilgrims colonized the continents. As I will demonstrate by focusing on the figure of Gucumatz, from the opening pages of the *Popol Vuh*, Native societies have never existed in hermetic isolation, but have always been engaged in complex negotiations with other cultures.

This can be seen in the middle section of the narrative when, after a long mythological account of the hero twins' journey through the underworld, the *Popol Vuh* suddenly shifts to the historical era, known to anthropologists as the early postclassic period (900–1200). The Plumed Serpent – known as Kukulcan among the Yucatán Maya and Quetzalcoatl to the Nahuatl speakers of the Mexican valley – is a deity whose origins date back to the deepest antiquity of Mesoamerican culture. While difficult to measure, the temporal depth of the story can be formulated in chronological time by noting that the Plumed Serpent is found depicted in Olmec pictographs as early as 1000 BCE (Coe 1968: 114–15). To invoke an indigenous standard, the Maya believed that the Plumed Serpent presided over the dawn of creation. The cult of Gucumatz came to the Maya relatively late, however, through contact with other Mesoamerican cultures. The *Popol Vuh* recounts the moment of Quiché origins as associated with the time when a delegation of leaders set off for a kingdom in the east ruled by Nacxit, a Nahuatl title held by the king named Quetzalcoatl, to "receive lordship" (Tedlock 1985: 179, 315). There has been a great deal of speculation among anthropologists and archeologists about the place where the Quiché lords went to be coronated. A likely possibility is Chichén Itzá, a large capital where Toltec rulers from central Mexico lorded over Maya subjects who had earlier mixed with Putan conquerors from the Yucatán (ca. 850) (Sharer 1994: 424–32). Chichén Itzá is noted for its stunning architecture and, more pertinent to our search for the origin of Gucumatz's story, as a spiritual center for the cult of the Plumed Serpent.

It is interesting to observe that although the Quiché speak Maya, they do not trace their cultural identity back to the classic Maya (200–900) of Tikal, Palenque, or Copán,

but instead associate their emergence with the moment of contact with Gucumatz: "And this was the beginning and growth of the Quiché, when the Lord Plumed Serpent made the signs of greatness" (Tedlock 1985: 186). This image is beautifully mirrored in the opening section of the *Popol Vuh*, where the Plumed Serpent helps create the world out of primordial darkness. This connection between the postclassic and a still older sense of history, written in mythological terms – "Only the Creator, the Maker, Tepeu, Gucumatz, the Forefathers, were in the water surrounded by light" – offers an important insight into how the Maya conceived of "history" as cyclical. In this case, the primordial birth of humankind overseen by Gucumatz foretells the birth of the Quiché Maya in historical time, when they encounter the cult of the Plumed Serpent. It is also interesting to note that, like "The Origin of Stories," the Quichés' sense of identity is not "pure" but derives from contact with other cultures. In this case, the postclassic capital of Chichén Itzá represents a cultural fluorescence, when three of the great Mesoamerican cultures – the Yucatec, Maya, and Mexica or Nahuatl – all came together around the spiritual center of the Plumed Serpent.

I would argue that a careful study of the Maya has potentially important implications for a *transnational* and *transtemporal* paradigm of American studies. Rather than projecting the contemporary borders of the United States backwards through time, which anachronistically cuts Mesoamerica out of Native American literary history, Americanists need to become more aware of the masterpieces of this exceedingly rich tradition. This is not, perhaps, as difficult as it would at first appear. The idea of "America," for example, has long stood as a symbol for the mixing and interaction of diverse cultures. What the *Popol Vuh* demonstrates is that this cultural interaction has been characteristic of the continent since long before Cortés marched on Tenochitlán. The Maya conception of cyclical temporality, with its intricate awareness of the relationship between deep antiquity and the present, also offers an important corrective for past conceptions of American studies with its problematic prehistoric/historic periodization. Whereas the linear chronology of the European colonizers tends to ignore all that came before the moment of "discovery," adopting a Maya understanding of cyclical history might allow Americanists to see myth, antiquity, and the present as part of an ongoing continuum.

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9
Toltec Mirrors: Europeans and Native Americans in Each Other's Eyes

Renée Bergland

> The true artist: capable, practicing, skillful;
> Maintains dialogue with his heart, meets things with his mind.
>
> El verdadero artista: capaz, se adiestra, es habil;
> Dialoga con su corazon, encuentra las cosas con su mente.
>
> In qualli toltecatl: mozcaliani, mozcaliz, mihmati;
> Moyolnontzani, tlalnamiquini.
> (Levertov 1979: 84–5)

An ancient Aztec poem translated by the twentieth-century writer Denise Levertov reminds us that a true artist "maintains dialogue with his heart, meets things with his mind." The same could be said of a truly cross-cultural reader. When we read cross-culturally, we put our hearts into maintaining dialogue. As cross-cultural readers, we cannot ask texts to speak in our own voices or force them into the patterns we already know. We must meet them with our minds. The task is to create dialogue, to read truly, to translate again. We need to acknowledge that some texts are one sided – but that does not mean we should refuse to read them. On the contrary, the goal is to bring many texts and stories into conversation with each other and to create new dialogues for ourselves.

In the case of the Americas, cross-cultural reading is particularly necessary. For more than five hundred years the places that we call the Americas have been the scene of highly charged encounters between Native, European, and American people. They have married each other and murdered each other. They have bought and sold and stolen from each other. They have shared cultural practices, words, crops, and landscapes, creating unique American cultures, while also battling over cultural differences, languages, food supplies, and territories. They have looked at each other

as monsters, lovers, gods, demons, friends, enemies, or family members. Sometimes, insistently, they have overlooked each other's existence, while at other times they have seen each other as strange or even magical mirror figures without identities of their own.

These intimate yet often oppositional relationships demand cross-cultural strategies of analysis. We must consider Native writers in conversation with many others. This essay begins with an Aztec story about a mirror. It considers the Aztec story in conversation with works by William Shakespeare, the English playwright who never visited America, Roger Williams, the Puritan minister and founder of Rhode Island who traveled between England and New England, and Sor Juana, the Mexican nun who never visited Europe. Although Williams is the only one who traveled between America and Europe, all of these writers wrote cross-cultural texts that are implicitly or explicitly in conversation with both native and European stories and texts. This essay discusses Shakespeare in a Taino context, Williams in a Narragansett context, and Sor Juana in an Aztec context. It focuses on the mirror metaphors that are central to all of their discussions of the complications of looking at each other across cultural and colonial boundaries.

The frequency of mirror metaphors in colonial literature suggests that exchanges of looks, images, and self-images were a vital and dynamic part of cross-cultural dialogue. The seventeenth-century Spanish priest Bartolomé de Las Casas, who first visited the Americas in 1502, less than a decade after Columbus, imagines the first exchange of looks as a moment of great possibility: "The Christians gazed at the Indians, no less than the Indians at them, amazed at the gentleness, innocence, and trust of people whom they had never met" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 31). As Las Casas describes it, the discovery is mutual, and the amazement is shared. Both Christians and Indians perceive each other as gentle and innocent. Later, they will fabricate stories (based on misapprehensions) of monsters and cannibals, but for one moment, Las Casas tells us, they looked straight at each other and not at the monsters that lived in their imaginations. Soon, however, fear and desire took over from amazement, as Europeans and Natives began to try to see each other in their own different cultural frames. Simultaneously, they entered the hall of mirrors known today as the Americas.

Because mirrors create dialogic spaces, texts that center on mirror tropes grow more interesting and more significant when we read them in dialogue with each other. At times, cross-cultural dialogues are buried in texts that may seem one sided. For example, some would argue that *The Tempest*, which portrays non-Europeans as monstrous and distorted reflections of a solely European reality, is a one-sided colonialist monologue. But even if that were true, it would not mean that we should refuse to read *The Tempest*. Instead, we must try to create dialogues that respond to, include, and reframe the old colonialist monologues.

The Smoking Mirror: The Struggle Between Conquest and Community

Centuries before Columbus, Aztecs told stories about Quetzalcoatl and Huitzilopochtli. Quetzalcoatl was the god of creation and community. His rival, Huitzilopochtli, was the god of war and conquest. The two gods struggled for domination over human destiny. Then one of the younger gods, Tezcatlipoca (whose name means smoking mirror), played a trick on Quetzalcoatl. He presented him with a gift wrapped in cotton. When Quetzalcoatl opened it, he found himself staring at his own reflection in a mirror. Quetzalcoatl was shocked and devastated; he had never known that he had a human face. He screamed, and fled, abandoning the Aztecs to the control of Huitzilopochtli.

Ironically, when Hernán Cortés arrived in Mexico, some Aztecs mistook him for the returning Quetzalcoatl. They hoped that his arrival would spark the creation of a new community and a move away from the culture of conquest that prevailed in Mexico before Cortés. Instead, Cortés turned out to be a far more destructive conquistador than the Aztecs themselves. But the Aztec story reminds us that conquest and community are two sides of the same darkly human glass – and that even the worst acts of human violence give birth to new worlds (Fuentes 1992: 109–10).

Although Native American people come from many traditions, some completely different from the Aztec, all Native Americans share the fact that their identities are distinctly "New World" identities, shaped by circumstances of conquest and community. Whether they are known as Native Americans or American Indians, the indigenous peoples of the Americas are always being explained in relation to their contact with Europeans. When they are called Native Americans, the word *Native* reminds us that they are descended from those who lived here long before Europeans came to this place. The word *American* reminds us that Europeans did come, that Amerigo Vespucci remapped the world and renamed the land, and that more than five hundred years of history have shaped this place and the people descended from both Europeans and Natives. When they are called American Indians, the word *Indian* returns us to Columbus' desire to find India, and to the complex geography of cultural contact that followed.

"Native American" may be a racial definition, but it is certainly not a biological one. Rather, Native people are those whose lives, family histories, and cultures remember and value the significance of the time before Europeans came here. Perhaps more importantly, tribal people also remember the history of their own relation to European cultures, individuals, and governments. When we read writings by or about early Native Americans, we are reading works that are bound to history in very important ways.

As we read works that attempt to describe the complexities of racialized history, we need to consider the cross-cultural impacts of Native American, European, and American histories and cultures on each other. This is a particularly difficult task, since many of the written records that we have access to are European. Native voices are relatively silent. Even when we do have records of the thoughts and traditions of Native people, the very fact that they are alphabetically written (and often translated in the language of the colonizing Europeans) makes them troubling documents (see chapter 8, this volume). As David Damrosch puts it, Aztec texts are "rarely pure and never simple" (Damrosch 1993: 140). The same is true of all colonial texts, Native and European.

This complexity can be daunting. There is always the fear that European translations of Native American languages and ideas are actually erasures or disfigurements rather than translations. Translating Native American languages runs the risk of transforming Natives into a subspecies of Europeans. In *The Poetics of Imperialism*, Eric Cheyfitz describes "two opposing politics of translation": imperialist translation represses its own difficulties, while anti-imperialist translation acknowledges its own difficult politics (Cheyfitz 1991: xvi). Cheyfitz uses Shakespeare's play *The Tempest* as an example of imperialist translation, but he does not develop the opposing global or cross-cultural model of translation. This essay explores the possibility of such cross-cultural reading strategies, when it considers the works of William Shakespeare, Roger Williams, and Sor Juana in the context of Taino, Narragansett, and Aztec traditions.

One scholar who offers a model for anti-imperial translation is Wai Chee Dimock. Dimock defines "global translation" as "a bond uniting the living, the dead, and the unborn, a continuum across space and time as well as across language" (Dimock 2003: 505). When Dimock emphasizes the bonds made by translations, her argument aligns with the Aztec insight into the dialogues of the heart that are central to artistry. For Dimock, translation itself is a dialogue of the heart. Dimock's approach is somewhat radical since she encourages readers to cross national and historical boundaries, but it is singularly appropriate for reading the literatures of the first meetings between Europeans and Native Americans. As Myra Jehlen puts it, students of Early Native America "need to take a radical approach to meet the terms of their materials: on the one side, oral texts of obscure origin and descent, and, on the other, a literature of colonization that denies outright the linguistic capability of its colonial subjects" (Jehlen 1994: 43). Jehlen argues that we must think radically, since traditional approaches are caught up in colonialist discourses that limit their outcomes.

Where Dimock suggests "global translation," the Native American scholar Arnold Krupat suggests "ethnocriticism," which he explains as "a criticism that insists upon a commitment to dialogue" (Krupat 1992: 28). What I am proposing here is a reading strategy that pays attention to the implicit dialogue within translations while also creating new dialogues among them. I am suggesting that we cannot read any of these texts by themselves; many are one sided and problematic, but they speak to each other nonetheless, even when, like Columbus and the Tainos, they speak in languages unknown to each other.

Like a mirror, a translation can be one sided. There is always a danger that a Spanish speaker like Columbus might only hear or understand Spanish concepts in spite of the fact that his interlocutors do not share his frame of reference (this is Cheyfitz's "imperialist translation"). Michel de Certeau goes so far as to assert that different discourses "destroy one another as soon as they touch: a shattering of mirrors" (Certeau 1986: 71).

But the mirrors don't always break. Translation can also open possibilities for communication and for genuine dialogue between and among strangers (this is Dimock's "global translation"). The Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes argues that "we see ourselves in the unburied mirror of identity only when accompanied – ourselves with others." For Fuentes, the buried mirror is a metaphor for the pre-Columbian Americas, and unburying the mirror is the task of recovering the refracted and reflected self-consciousnesses of both the Natives and the Europeans who first looked at each other over five centuries ago. As Fuentes explains it, these recovered mirrors are both "a reflection of reality and a projection of the imagination" (Fuentes 1992: 353, 11).

The cross-cultural reading strategies outlined here pay attention to the possible silences, distortions, and violence of translation and of cultural mirroring, while also attempting to recover the dialogic mirrors that help us to imagine the possibilities of communication, new perspectives and new human communities. As we read Spanish, French, and English texts together in *The Literatures of Colonial America* (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001), we get a sense of many dialogues: those between Taino islanders and Spanish sailors, Narragansett sachems and English officials, Hurons and French priests, Aztecs and Spanish conquerors; also those between Tainos, Narragansetts, Hurons, and Aztecs; the English, the French, and the Spaniards. We must read these dialogues with great attention and with great imagination. The process of reading dialogically is not ahistorical – it demands great attention to histories and to contexts. But it is not rigidly historical either – we need to be aware that we are reading creatively across time – diachronically as well as dialogically. We are reading now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

The Monstrous Mirror: Reading *The Tempest* in a Taino Context

The Tainos were the islanders who greeted Columbus, the people whom Las Casas imagined sharing the innocent mutual gaze of first contact. Without a common language, they somehow conversed with the Spaniards, communicating that they were gentle people, and warning them against more threatening, violent people to the north. The Spaniards called the terrifying savages (whom they were warned about, but never met) "Canibs" or "Caribs." Later, the word passed into English as "cannibals." Shakespeare transposed the name to "Caliban" when he named his savage island character in *The Tempest*.

But the savage islanders probably never existed. Columbus explains in his *Letter on the Discovery of America* that "I did not see any monstrosity, nor did I have knowledge

of them (monsters) anywhere, excepting a certain island named Charis" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 26). In other writings, he called the mythical residents of Charis "Caribs" or "Canibs." These sentences point out that from the start, Columbus was looking for monsters. Although he never actually saw any, he tells his European readers that he knows of some, who will come to play an important role in the literature of colonialism.

In *Colonial Encounters*, Peter Hulme argues that all of these names for the monstrous Carib/Canibs are based on the same misunderstanding that labeled the Tainos "Indians." Columbus, who hoped he was in India, kept inquiring after the Grand Khan, the Asian leader whom Marco Polo had described. No one knows how the islanders actually responded, but we do know that Columbus understood them to be informing him that he could find Canibs to the north. At that, Columbus declared: "The Canibs are nothing else than the people of the Grand Khan" (Hulme 1986: 22). In other words, the word "cannibal," like the word "Indian," is a mistranslation based on a profound geographical and cross-cultural misunderstanding.

What does this mean for Caliban, or for Shakespeare? Is Caliban really Taino in any meaningful way? When dialogue was so difficult for the Europeans and Native Americans who were there together, how can we open up a cross-cultural dialogue many centuries later, based on an English play that is itself constructed around a character whose name signifies the failure of such dialogue? Perhaps *The Tempest* is a focal point for students of colonialism because it is so explicit about the very silences, blindnesses, and exploitations that underlie the "brave new world."

The Tempest has a long history in colonial and postcolonial literary studies because it epitomizes tropes of European conquest and indigenous monstrosity. In the twentieth century, writers as diverse as Jose Enrique Rodó, Dev Virahsawmy, Gloria Naylor, Aimé Cesaire, and Jamaica Kincaid rewrote *The Tempest* from various perspectives (Latin American, African, African American, and Caribbean), while scholars such as Eric Cheyfitz, Peter Hulme, Thomas Cartelli, and Laura Donaldson (to name a few) used their analyses of *The Tempest* as cornerstones in anti-imperialist, postcolonialist, and feminist projects. These writers and scholars return to *The Tempest* because it is a compelling elaboration of the logic of conquest.

The Tempest is set on a magical and mysterious island somewhere between Italy and Africa. The residents of the island are a native man, Caliban, a magical creature, Ariel (who is also native to the island), a wizard, Prospero (the deposed duke of Milan), and his daughter, Miranda. Both Caliban and Ariel are enslaved to Prospero, and during the play both try to escape their slavery, while Prospero tries to escape from the island and regain his power in Europe. With Ariel's help, Prospero is able to decoy his brother, the usurping duke, onto the island and trick his nephew Ferdinand and his daughter Miranda into falling in love. With her marriage, both Miranda and her father regain their proper place in Europe. Ariel is freed and Caliban is reformed and remanded into lifelong subservience.

Although *The Tempest* is not set in a geographically real place, scholars and writers see the island as one of the simplest and most powerful idealizations of colonial

relationships. Shakespeare boils down more than a century of European colonization (of Africa, Asia, and the Americas) into a very simple plot between a few representative characters. There are two enslaved and resisting natives, one brutish and violent, the other subtle and mysteriously aligned with terrifying spiritual forces. There are also two colonizing Europeans; one a man who uses his slaves, his family, his books, and the island's resources to gain power in Europe, the other a woman whose beauty gives her great power even as it turns her into a pawn in her father's struggles with the natives and the Europeans.

Both Caliban and Miranda are framed by the discourses of looking. Miranda's name comes from the Latin words for looking and for amazement (which give us "mirror" and "miracle," for example). Caliban (whose name and role recall the native Caribbeans, the Tainos) is repeatedly called a monster. The word "monster," which means a strange-looking person of dubious humanity, comes from the Latin word for "show" (which gives us the word "demonstrate," for example). Caliban, the monster, is a cannibal curiosity, something to look at or to display for profit. Miranda, on the other hand, is a seer, someone who looks, who perceives marvels. The play centers on the regulation of their gazes, insisting that Caliban must not look at Miranda (since his sexual desire for her threatens the colonial order) and that Miranda must overlook Caliban (since her sexual desire for her European cousin is necessary to consolidate her father's precarious position in the colonial order).

Caliban serves as a monstrous mirror for Europeans. When the Italians Trinculo and Stephano first meet Caliban, Trinculo wishes they were in England, because that is where "a monster makes a man." When Trinculo jokes about a monster making a man, he is talking about making his fortune by showing Caliban in a freak show. Many Indians were displayed this way in seventeenth-century England; Epenow, from Martha's Vineyard, was exhibited in 1611, the year that *The Tempest* was written (see Vaughan 2000). Trinculo's freak show scheme is one of the most basic forms of economic exploitation of colonial people, and his quick joke points out the centrality of economics (and economic exploitation) to colonial exchanges. It seems that all of the Europeans in *The Tempest* share a profit motive with their aptly named ruler, Prospero.

But there is also a double meaning in the assertion that "a monster makes a man": looking at a "monster" whose humanity is in doubt helps the viewer to establish his or her own humanity. A monster makes a man feel sure he is a man (rather than a monster), and Caliban, the "brave monster," proves instrumental in the construction of the brave, new world that *The Tempest* helps to create.

Strangely, it turns out that the way to see a brave new world is to overlook the monsters who already occupy it. Miranda speaks the lines:

> O wonder!
> How many goodly creatures are there here!
> How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world!
> That has such people in it!
> (Act 5, sc. 1)

Most amazing about Miranda's speech is that the brave new world that fills her with wonder and hope is the world of Europe or at least of European America. She says the lines when she first sees a crowd of European noblemen wandering around her island home. For Miranda, as for the other Europeans, the Caribbean is an empty place, peopled only by slavish monsters whose humanity is nearly invisible to her. It becomes a brave new world when it is occupied by European men.

But Miranda is also a "victim of colonialist Prosperity," to quote Laura Donaldson (1992: 16). Caliban threatens to rape her for the same reasons that Ferdinand finally marries her: because sexual intercourse with her is a means of forging a bond with her powerful father. Donaldson argues that "like Caliban, Miranda has been 'colonized and tricked' and exists only as man's other side, his denied, abused and hidden side" (Donaldson 1992: 16). Miranda's sex makes her a monster just as Caliban's race makes him one; both characters ultimately deny themselves and disappear, serving merely as mirrors in which colonizing patriarchs can see themselves endlessly reflected and recreated.

The Tempest's insights and blindnesses are symptomatic of the entire discourse of discovery. The European discovery of America was a twofold process: not only did Europeans see America as a new world, but they also made themselves blind to the ones who already occupied the place. As Mary Louise Pratt explains in *Imperial Eyes*, "the act of discovery itself for which all the untold lives were sacrificed and miseries endured, consisted of . . . seeing" (Pratt 1992: 203–4). *The Tempest* shows us that in colonial discourse discovering the New World is finally simply a matter of seeing Europeans in a new context, and simultaneously, of refusing to see the people who were at home in that context before the Europeans arrived.

The Dialogic Mirror: Roger Williams and the Many Languages of America

On July 4, 1854, the Mahican Indian Josiah Quinney gave a speech to a predominantly white audience in New York State recounting ancestral stories about the first contacts among Natives and Europeans in the Northeast. Quinney echoes Las Casas in his emphasis on the mutual gaze between Indians and Europeans, but his speech also emphasizes the centuries of silence and blindness that followed these first encounters:

> In the select and exclusive circles of your rich men, of the present day, I should encounter the gaze of curiosity, but not such as overwhelmed the senses of the Aborigines, my ancestors. "Our visitors were white, and must be sick. They asked for rest and kindness, we gave them both. They were strangers and we took them in – naked and we clothed them." (Calloway 1994: 41)

Quinney's description of the first contact between northeastern Indians and the English may recall Shakespeare's description of Caliban's generous welcome to Pros-

pero and Miranda when they arrived on his island. But Quinney's rhetoric is Christian rather than Shakespearean. His language for describing his tribes' encounter with the English is the language of Matthew 25: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me" (Matthew 25: 35–6).

When Quinney translates his own tribal tradition into Christian terms, he makes his Mohegan ancestors into good Christians who help needy strangers and follow the teachings of Jesus (even before they have been introduced to Christianity). This is something of a reversal of the rhetoric of the English settlers, who thought of themselves as the ones who were helping the Indians and introducing Christian values to them. But at the same time, Quinney's transposition of the biblical language also puts the English into the role that Jesus plays in the story, for in Matthew 25 the poor stranger turns out to be Jesus in disguise. In this sense, Quinney has adopted – or perhaps coopted – the English view of the encounter.

In spite of his attempt at reversing Christian rhetoric, Quinney is trapped within European language and Christian metaphors. In his speech, he explains that he is aware that the Native perspective is almost lost to language:

> Your written accounts of events at this period are familiar to you, my friends. Your children read them every day in their school books; but they do not read – no mind can conceive, no pen record, the terrible story of recompense for kindness, which for two hundred years has been paid the simple, trusting, guileless Muh-he-con-new (Calloway 1994: 41).

When Quinney asserts "the terrible story" of colonial domination – the cruel recompense the Mohegans received for welcoming the English kindly – is inconceivable and unwriteable, he echoes Caliban's outraged cry of frustration at the fact that English discourse has no room for him:

> You taught me language, and my profit on't
> Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid you
> For learning me your language!
> (*The Tempest*, Act 1, sc. 2)

Like the fictional Caliban, Josiah Quinney struggles to express his resistance to colonialism from within the colonialist discourse, but all he can do is point to his own silence and the silence of his ancestors.

Yet although Quinney's description of his ancestors' experience is incomplete and their actual stories may be inconceivable even to him, his speech still manages to remind us of historical realities. In fact, Roger Williams, the English migrant to America who published *A Key into the Languages of America* in 1643, describes his own encounters with Native Northeasterners in remarkably similar terms. For Williams, the most striking feature of his contact with Native people was their generous

hospitality to strangers. Like Quinney, he described Native Americans as untutored Christians who were more "Humane and Courteous" than the English. At the same time, with the typological mindset common to Puritans, he may have seen himself as a Christ-like figure who had come to redeem them.

Roger Williams migrated to Massachusetts to serve as a minister in the Bay Colony, but he soon disagreed with other clerical leaders and was banished. He left the colony on a midwinter night, walked through the snow, and was welcomed by Narragansett Indians under the leadership of the sachems Canonicus and Miantonomi. Through the long cold winter of 1635–6, he lived with them, learning their language and eating the food they shared with him from their rapidly dwindling stores. Over the next five decades, Williams maintained his friendships with Indians, while he also remained loyal to the English Puritans who had banished him. Throughout his life, Williams fought against intolerance (of Native Americans, of non-English customs, and of non-Puritan religious beliefs) while maintaining a firm commitment to his own English Puritan view of worldly and spiritual matters. His experience of America was profoundly intercultural – rich, complicated, often contradictory. In 1643, when he returned to England to try to secure the patent for the Rhode Island territory where he had established an inclusive alternative to the less-tolerant Massachusetts Bay colony, he published *A Key into the Languages of America*.

Perhaps because it is so insistently dialogical, *A Key into the Languages of America* is a very difficult book to read, much harder than Shakespeare. For an English reader, it is hard to know how to approach the Narragansett words. It is also hard to know which dialogue to focus on: there are conversations between the various speakers in the word lists, between the lists themselves and the "Observations" interspersed between them, and between the body of each chapter and the short poem that ends it. Further, the chapters speak to each other, adding up to a narrative that is something like a novel, something like a scriptural narrative. Readers have been baffled, frustrated, and delighted by this book for centuries. Recent studies by Ivy Schweitzer, Joshua David Bellin, and Thomas Scanlan celebrate the dialogical bent of the book, and its profoundly intercultural sensibilities. What Williams promises us in his introductory letter turns out to be true: the *Key* opens a box filled with keys, each opening into another new conversation.

Williams' *Key* is a generic hybrid, incorporating a traveler's or trader's phrasebook, a theological/anthropological treatise, and a collection of lyric poetry. Bellin asserts that this textual complexity illustrates "intimate dynamic multiple relationships between" Europeans and Indians (Bellin 2001: 52), while Schweitzer argues that the complex structure has profound implications: "it provides a powerful metaphor for the entire text as a dialogue between two cultures," and it also makes "an extraordinary recommendation for cultural contact: that it proceed by, and achieve, intersubjectivity" (Schweitzer 1991: 194). The dialogic structure that Schweitzer remarks upon here is also, quite literally, a mirror structure: Narragansett and English discourses are set up on the page in facing columns. The mirroring, like the dialogue, is profoundly intersubjective, and in the context of the overpowering colonialist

discourse we have encountered in works such as *The Tempest*, which deny the subjectivity of colonized subjects, it is new and exciting.

As he begins, Williams explains to his readers that he is trying to create a new kind of book. "I present you with a *Key*," he writes. "I have not heard of the like, yet framed, since it pleased God to bring that mighty *Continent* of *America* to light" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 268). It is important that he does not put his work into a context of European discovery; rather, he says that his book is unlike anything that has been written since the moment God created America. Williams has a very deep sense of time here – he looks much further back than Columbus did. In that very broad scope, he both asserts the uniqueness of his project and tells his readers that he has "framed" the book with an artist's care. As Williams continues, *A Key into the Language of America*'s uniqueness becomes clearer. "This key respects the Native Language" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 268), which makes it very different from texts like Columbus' letters and journals, Shakespeare's play, and even Las Casas' history, none of which gives respect to Native language. Respecting Native language means paying attention to it, writing it down with care and accuracy. It means giving Native language space on the page. It means constructing a text that is not only multilingual, but also multilayered, and open-ended. When Williams explains that "A little *Key* may open a *Box* where lies a bunch of *Keyes*" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 269), the image is one of infinite possibility.

Williams ends his preface by returning to the theme of respect for Native language. He explains:

> The English for every Indian word or phrase stands in a straight line directly against the Indian: yet sometimes there are two words for the same thing (for their language is exceeding copious, and they have five or six words sometimes for one thing) and then the English stands against them both: for example in the second leafe,
> Cowanckamish &
> Cuckquenamish *I pray your favour*

This is a remarkable way to end his introduction, since he gives the last word to the Narragansetts, who have two ways of saying "I pray your favour." He is asking readers – in Narragansett! – to be attentive to his book and to the rich possibilities of the Narragansett language and culture he will describe within it. As he does so, he is also teaching us how to read dialogically, in two languages at once.

But *A Key into the Language of America* is much more than a guide to Narragansett language and culture. It is also a guide to English life, both in New England and in Old England. As we read, we get a sense of a world that is not strictly divided between Native Americans and Europeans. It is a border world; what Mary Louise Pratt calls a "contact zone," a place where cultures mix and people speak to each other and learn from each other. In "Letting Go Our Grand Obsessions," Annette Kolodny urges us to recognize that the cultural contact that takes place within such zones is "inscribed by the collisions and interpenetrations of language," and she encourages us

to interrogate language "especially as hybridized style, trope, story or structure – for the complex intersections of human encounters" (Kolodny 1992: 3). Kolodny's recommendations are easy to follow with *A Key*.

In the first chapter of the book, Williams presents short dialogues of greeting and welcome between two speakers. One of the interesting aspects of these "implicite dialogues" (as Williams calls them) is that they are presented in full in both languages, so that it is very hard to guess which conversational role is being played by an Indian or by an English person. In a series of "Observations," he describes the hospitable customs of the Narragansetts who had sheltered him when the Puritans banished him form the Massachusetts Bay colony. Finally, he ends with a lyric poem, which asks:

If Nature's Sonnes both wild and tame,
Humane and courteous be:
How ill becomes it Sonnes of God,
To want Humanity?
(Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 272)

This is a remarkable reversal. The Narragansetts presented in *A Key* may function as Caliban and the other "monsters" of early American literature do, as a sort of mirror for European Christians, but in this case, we can call it a dialogic mirror: one in which the humanity of Native Americans is accepted and affirmed, and used for the express purpose of reflecting upon and questioning the humanity of Christian Europeans. A question like Williams' is very different from Miranda's refusal to acknowledge Native humanity. It is the opening gambit in a richly productive dialogue.

Both the Indian, Josiah Quinney, and the Englishman, Roger Williams, show us the limits of translation and the particular difficulties of Early Native American studies. But both men's works also offer a sense of possibility. Although the Native Americans who are figured in their pages are proto-Christians, they are definitely human beings with souls. Indeed, Williams explains that their word *Michachunck*, which means "soul," has affinity "with a word signifying a looking glasse, or cleere resemblance, so that it hath its name from a cleere sight or discerning" (Teunissen and Hinz 1973: 193–4). In his book, the Narragansetts' words and their vision of their own souls are clearly reflected, even though they are refracted through European and Christian languages and lenses. Similarly, two hundred years later, when Quinney frames his ancestors' stories as unwriteable and nearly inconceivable, he simultaneously asks us to imagine their experience. The Native Americans described by Quinney and Williams may mirror European perspectives, but they do not disappear into the mirrors.

The Divine Mirror: Sor Juana's Many Perspectives

According to the anonymous authors of Tlatelolco, the Aztec confederates who greeted Cortés in 1521 brought him many gifts: gold and silver disks representing

the sun, brilliantly colored quetzal feathers, and many other precious things, including "a mirror to be hung on his person" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 65). Although the meanings of their gifts are somewhat obscure, the most significant fact is that shortly after the Mexican encounters in 1528, records were written in Nahuatl describing the events from a Native perspective.

In light of the story of Quetzalcoatl and the smoking mirror, a mirror might be seen as something of a poisoned gift. Perhaps the Cuetlaxtecas hoped that, like Quetzalcoatl, Cortés would turn and flee. Or perhaps they believed that Cortés was Quetzalcoatl, and genuinely intended to welcome him back. At any rate, the fact that the Natives gave the mirror to Cortés (rather than the other way around) implies that the Aztecs and their allies were not going to be absorbed passively into Spanish discourses of discovery. Giving the Spaniard a mirror reminds him that the Natives are watching him, and that he must reflect upon his own appearance and conduct.

By 1531 the Spanish had conquered the Aztecs and taken over the reins of their empire. Mexican Natives had also been converted to Catholic Christianity with force, violence, and remarkable speed. And then, a "humble Indian called Juan Diego" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 160) wandered up into the hills above Mexico City to Tepeyacac, the shrine of Tonantzin, the fertility goddess. There, he saw an apparition of a dark-skinned, native-looking divinity, who announced herself as the Virgin of Guadalupe. In 1649 Bishop Zumárraga wrote Juan Diego's story of the miraculous appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Nahuatl, which was the language of Juan Diego and also the language spoken by the apparition. Since it was not recorded for more than a century, the historical record of the event is as shrouded in mystery as those of most religious miracles. But its meaning is clear: when the Virgin appeared at the shrine of Tonantzin, the ancient Mexican religion that had been practiced there was transformed – bloodlessly – into Christianity. The brown-faced Virgin replaced the brown-faced Tonanztin. Ever since, the Virgin of Guadalupe has been a symbol of anti-colonialist Mexican nationalism and non-European pride.

Returning to the metaphors of mirroring and translation, we find that it is hard to determine where our characters stand. When Juan Diego presents his rose-garlanded image of a beautiful Native saint to his bishop, does the Virgin mirror Tonantzin or does Tonanztin mirror the Virgin? Is this story an example of an imperial translation that erases Tonantzin and represses the great pain and difficulty of violent conversion? Or does the Indian Juan Diego control the translation and the mirror here? Have Juan Diego and his people converted to Catholicism, or has the bishop (who is persuaded to build a cathedral at Tonantzin's traditional place of worship) been unconsciously converted to Tonantzin – that is, to fertility worship? Who is mirroring whom?

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz would have delighted in these questions. Sor Juana was an acclaimed baroque poet, feminist, and philosopher. She was a Mexican criolla; a woman of mixed race whose ancestors included Spaniards and Native Mexicans. She knew both Spanish and Nahuatl (as well as Latin and Greek) and drew on many cultural traditions, including the Spanish, the Aztec, the African, the Judeo-Christian, and the classical Greek and Roman traditions. As a baroque poet, she loved

to play with complicated metaphysical questions and tricky metaphors. She entered a convent to avoid marriage and devote herself to her studies. In her autobiographical narrative, *The Reply*, she defended her habit of thinking about everything, explaining that she could never resist intellectual activity, even when she tried. When her bishop instructed her to give up studying (because it was unsuitable for pious women), Sor Juana "could not carry it out . . . I saw nothing without reflecting on it; I heard nothing without wondering at it" (Trueblood 1988: 224). Asked to put away her books, she studied conversations. Sent into solitude, she thought about shadows, the angles of her walls, optics, and geometry. Sentenced to the hard labor of the convent kitchen, she explored the chemistry of eggs, flour, sugar, and fat, declaring: "If Aristotle had been a cook, he would have written much more" (ibid: 226).

In 1688 Sor Juana wrote *The Divine Narcissus,* a religious drama or *auto sacramental* that she hoped would be performed in Madrid. *Autos* were allegorical performances with elaborately designed sets that included "poetry, instrumental and choral music, dance, and spectacular effects blended to cause delight, awe, and religious fervor in the spectator" (Peters 1998: xviii). The plays were presented on the feast of Corpus Christi in honor of the body of Christ and the sacrament of the Eucharist.

When Sor Juana considered the ritual of the Eucharist, in which worshipers drink wine and eat bread that represent the blood and body of Jesus Christ, her thoughts turned to Aztec religious rituals. Specifically, she began to think about the ritual worship of Huitzilopochtli, when Aztecs mixed human blood with the first grain of the season and celebrated the blessings of "the God of Seeds." The parallels between the Aztec and the Christian rituals are clear, but the allegorical significance of such parallels is rather cloudy. An Aztec *auto sacramental* would be almost impossible to present if it directly compared Christ's blood to the blood of sacrificed human children. As a serious religious person, Sor Juana must have been well aware of the troubling implications of comparing Catholic sacraments to cruel rituals of child sacrifice. But as a Mexican criolla she was probably also aware of the appropriateness of comparing the coercive cruelty of European Christian conquistadors to that of the Aztecs. Indeed, from some angles the conquerors probably looked more barbarous than the conquered. In this context, Sor Juana turned to a mirror story. This was a natural move for her; María Elena de Valdés remarks that Sor Juana's work reveals "an almost obsessive fascination with mirrors." As Valdés explains it, mirror metaphors hold out the possibility of "the doubling of the other" and allow the possibility that a person can be "many and one at the same time" (Valdés 1998: 87).

For Sor Juana, the multiple perspectives of Aztec and Christian beliefs offered exciting intellectual possibilities. She decided to use the complicated and troubling Aztec metaphors as part of her Christian allegory, and simultaneously to reach back to the classical tradition for another set of metaphors. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* tells the story of Narcissus: a handsome youth who catches sight of his own reflection in a fountain, falls madly in love with it, and lingers by the water until he dies. At death, he is transformed into a white flower, while Echo, the nymph who loved him, and has been cursed with the inability to speak for herself, repeats the words of others until she

disappears into nothing but an inarticulate, echoing voice. In her *auto sacramental*, *The Divine Narcissus*, Sor Juana allegorizes Christ as Narcissus and Satan as the inarticulate woman, Echo. Rather than seeing his reflection in a spring, Sor Juana's Christ/ Narcissus sees himself reflected in the imperfect mirror of human nature. Loving human nature because it reflects his divinity, he sacrifices his life for his love, leaving behind him the white flowers of the Eucharist.

The Narcissus story is a slightly awkward allegory for the Christian one. But it is a particularly fitting allegory for a Mexican writer. In the Mexican context, the most striking aspect of *The Divine Narcissus* allegory is that it is also parallel to the story of Quetzalcoatl and the smoking mirror. In that tradition, Quetzalcoatl looks into the dark glass and sees his own face, realizing that his nature must be like human nature, since his face looks human. The knowledge destroys him, and he disappears, leaving Huitzilopochtli, the God of Seeds, to reign alone. Although Sor Juana does not explicitly state that her Narcissus figure allegorizes Quetzalcoatl as well as Christ, the Aztec context both complicates and makes sense of *The Divine Narcissus*.

Sor Juana is quite explicit that *The Divine Narcissus* must be read cross-culturally and understood in the many contexts of Spain and Mexico: Christianity, classical mythology, and Aztec religious practices and traditions. Her *loa*, the introductory scenario that frames the longer play, makes this cross-culturalism explicit by featuring a long, four-way dialogue among two Aztecs, America and Occident, and two Europeans, Religion and Zeal. The *loa* begins with a Tocotín, a traditional Aztec dance of worship, accompanied by singing addressed to the God of Seeds. America, a dignified Aztec woman, and Occident, her gallant partner, explain their celebration. The European, Christian Religion, and her hot-tempered consort, Zeal, interrupt their ritual, and Religion urges Zeal to attack the Aztecs. He vanquishes them in battle, and then Religion speaks gently to them, offering to show them a play (*The Divine Narcissus*) that will prove to them that they have been unintentionally worshiping Christ all along. America and Occident agree to watch the play, but before it begins Zeal interrupts to ask where it will be performed. Religion explains that it will be performed in Madrid, even though it has been composed in Mexico, declaring that "men of reason realize there is no distance that deters, nor seas that interchange efface" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 159). Finally, strangely, all of the characters of the *loa* – European Christians as well as Aztecs – begin to sing in unison: "Blessed the day I came to know the great God of Seeds!" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 160). With this refrain, all exit, dancing and singing.

As with Tonantzin and the Virgin of Guadalupe, it is hard to know who has converted whom. In fact, according to Patricia Peters, during Sor Juana's time "devotion to the Virgin of Guadalupe was popular and intense, and the appearance of America in her Aztec costume and demeanor would immediately evoke connections to the American Virgin Mary" (Peters 1998: xxiv). The Aztec figure of America mirrors the European figure of Religion, just as the Aztec Virgin of Guadalupe mirrors the European Virgin of Lourdes.

At the same time, Sor Juana emphasizes the fact that the whole scenario is being composed in Mexico and sent to Madrid, to enlighten and inspire European Spanish audiences. In such a context, it is fitting to think of her entire play as a mirror, out of which might spring the frightening realization that the colonizing Spaniards have been profoundly changed by their encounter with the Americas. As they watch and reflect upon *The Divine Narcissus*, perhaps they will unconsciously begin to worship the Aztec God of creation and community, Quetzalcoatl, who has been previously unknown to them. Certainly, at the end of the *loa*, when the European and American characters sing their prayer to the God of Seeds in unison, this fascinating possibility is foreshadowed. (See also chapter 17, this volume.)

Sor Juana is not afraid of confusion. She constructs *The Divine Narcissus* as a confusing hall of mirrors (filled with mysterious and baffling echoes), yet at the same time she succeeds in making the confusions of mirroring, translation, and cross-cultural encounter irresistibly exciting to think about. She presents us with a smoking mirror – dark, dangerous and confusing – and also with an illuminating mirror – one that projects the light of imagination around the great circumferences of the human world.

Toltec Mirrors: Towards an Ethics of Cross-Cultural Reading

William Shakespeare, Roger Williams, and Sor Juana can all be described as *toltecatl*. Each is a "true artist: capable, practicing, skillful," one who "Maintains dialogue with his heart, meets things with his mind" (Levertov 1979: 84). In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare shows readers how colonialism works, and how aboriginal natives can be silenced, overlooked, and denied – turned into monstrous mirrors for patriarchal colonizers who see only themselves. In *A Key into the Languages of America*, Roger Williams asks his readers to pay attention to the possibilities of language – particularly the possibility that colonial and native discourses can respond to each other dialogically, refracting and mirroring each other so that each is transformed. Finally, in *The Divine Narcissus*, Sor Juana draws us into an exuberant and dizzying hall of mirrors where there is space to acknowledge violence, distortion, and blindness, but also space to look each other in the face, to imagine and to see each other's humanity.

In order to build a genuinely cross-cultural community, we must attend to the violence of conquest; reflecting upon it rather than burying or denying it. It might be tempting to forswear conquest altogether – perhaps even to refuse to read within its colonialist discourses. But that is a false option. In *The Conquest of America*, Tzetvan Todorov advocates "the path of dialogue" as he encourages readers to continue to reflect upon the discourses of conquest because they "permit us to reflect upon ourselves, to discover resemblances as well as differences" (Todorov 1984: 250, 254). But when we enter this hall of mirrors, Doris Sommer reminds us to *Proceed With Caution* (1999). Along with Todorov and many postcolonial scholars, we may find some measure of self-knowledge in our study of writings that support, resist, or

otherwise engage with the discourses of conquest. Just as importantly, if we "notice the delicate contingency of human meanings" as Sommer urges, we may be able to move toward some understanding of cultural difference and of human beings separated from us by history and culture.

Native language and tradition is important to this effort. Latina feminist and theorist Gloria Anzaldúa invokes the Aztec term *nepantla*, which she associates with "states of mind that question old ideas and beliefs, acquire new perspectives, change worldviews, and shift from one world to another" (Anzaldúa and Keating 2002: 1). *Nepantlera* scholars offer translations and juxtapositions that cross language barriers, cultural barriers, and the barriers of time. As cross-cultural readers, we must also be visionary artists – *nepantlera toltecatls* – creating dialogues, and thoughtfully meeting the worlds that we encounter. To read early American literature cross-culturally is to find ourselves in dialogue with a painful, sometimes violent history and in community with oddly familiar strangers across great oceans of space and time.

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10
Reading for Indian Resistance

Bethany Ridgway Schneider

"In fourteen hundred and ninety-two, Columbus sailed the ocean blue." This ubiquitous and anonymous couplet describes the colonization of North and South America by Europeans as an easy rhyme between historical destiny and clear sailing into a vast spatial emptiness. The rhyme is not interrupted by mention of either the human populations or their land on the western side of the Atlantic and it never arrives at the island Columbus called San Salvador, or the Taino and Arawak people whom he met on that first journey. Rather, it suspends us in the time and space of the trajectory of discovery. Columbus' act of travel and the date in which he traveled stand alone; in the repetition of the doggerel the clock of "American" history is set and reset at "fourteen hundred and ninety-two" years after the birth of Jesus, thus drawing an easy line of connection between the Christian moment of origin and Columbus' three ships bobbing along on a bright blue sea. The act of reciting the verse – *repeating* the journey – connects its trajectory with the speaker, using the fictions of linear time to bypass the people Columbus named "Indians," their land and their history. The couplet's sing-song pedagogy avoids the history of Indian land, the Indian history of land, and the land of Indian history. It forms a model, in other words, through which we are taught never to reach questions of Native American presence, sovereignty, and survival in the so-called "New World."

Perhaps it is excessive to lay such a heavy burden of responsibility upon an anonymous verse, especially one almost always recited in self-conscious jest. But the sleight of hand performed by this impossibly compressed account, in which a linear narrative of European spatial destiny sidelines Native Americans, is a disappearing act against which anthologies of American literature – especially "early" American literature – have to struggle. How to collect and align in relatively consecutive order a series of documents written largely by Europeans obsessed with conquest of both Indian land and Indian people, *without* reifying the old, worn, but seemingly tireless notion of Native disappearance and voicelessness? How to present the comparatively small amount of transcribed, translated, and/or written Native American

materials in such a way as to convey their vast diversity of language, culture, and experience? How to convey pre-Columbian Native American cultural production as dynamic rather than miasmically mythical? How to present post-Columbian Native American cultural production as more than simply reactive to European incursions and pressures? And how, most of all, to complicate that "Columbian" moment so that, on October 12, fourteen hundred and ninety two, more than two thousand diverse cultures and language groups don't instantly become "Indians," colorful and interchangeable extras whose job is to bring the popcorn and the violence to the Technicolor epic of America?

The Literatures of Colonial America (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001) has faced this challenge by including a range of Native American authors and by continuing to include Native American authors beyond the pre-Columbian section at the beginning. It is also an anthology that contextualizes Native American cultural production by revealing the extent of the colonizers' obsession with Indians; many of the pieces in this collection are *about* Indians, providing a portrait of exactly how much labor European invaders put into defining, inventing, and categorizing the figure of the Indian. A picture emerges of an enormous struggle underway in the "colonial" period not only over Indian land and resources, but also over Indian representation. It is a battle that is still very much underway, and the way that literatures by and about Native Americans are compiled and read continues to wage that war. An anthology that includes Indian voices at every turn is taking a stand, insisting that Native American claims to cultural and geographical sovereignty are read and analyzed rather than literally papered over. But the form of an anthology itself – a compilation, in linear order, of the literatures of a given geographical location – reminds us of what is at stake for Native Americans as authors, subjects, defenders, and creators of culture. Why are Native Americans and their literatures *compiled*? How? And what sorts of knowledge does that taxonomy produce? What kinds of counter-taxonomies are possible? Into what sort of *teleology* are Indian authors and subjects inserted? What is the effect of folding Indian voices into a linear trajectory, and what sorts of counter-teleologies are possible? What effects have Native American self-representation and representation by others had on cultural and *geographical* sovereignty? This essay argues that the excitements and limitations of the project of anthologizing – the ways in which questions of order, time, and space are caught up in that necessary and complicated activity of compilation – are in fact the fundamental stakes in Native American discursive resistance to the colonizers' narratives of conquest, discovery, and conversion.

Part of the challenge in anthologizing literature by and about Native Americans lies in the word "literature" itself. If we take it to mean single-authored written texts that correspond to specific publication dates, Native American "literature" quickly gets tricky. This is not simply because many American Indian cultures are centered on oral traditions which do not effectively translate into the written, easily historicized word. The problems have a more active root than the already monumental issues surrounding translation and transmission across oral and written traditions, namely

the violent silencing of Native American voices and the destruction of Native American histories and texts that has been central to the colonial project. In order for a people to be indexed as historyless and landless, their claims to a past and to belonging must be either obliterated or effectively scrambled. All Native American voices have not been silenced and many Native American cultures have remained dynamic, present, and self-determining in spite of the enormous efforts ranging from genocidal violence to subtle cultural assaults that have been used against Indian people since before 1492. Demonstrating Native American survival and cultural dynamism through literature is essential and exciting. But the project of anthologizing the literatures of Native America alongside the American literatures of peoples originally from other continents is *also* the project of recording – using the conventions of linear time – the systematic silencing, scrambling, and destruction of Native American cultural production. Furthermore, reading for Indian resistance in early texts necessitates understanding that while the "colonial" status of European American countries has officially ended, the colonial status of Indian people has only *changed*. *The Literatures of Colonial America* brings us up to the end of the American Revolution and the end of a *British* colonial government in what is now the United States, and does so while interspersing Native American texts along the way. But national governments in the Western hemisphere remain, to this day, colonial governments, and Native American people are still colonized people.

One of the first actions of the Spanish colonizers in Mesoamerica was to destroy the libraries of the Mexicas (Aztecs), Mixtecs, and Mayans. Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl, a Mexica nobleman writing around 1600, describes the destruction of the Texcoco library in the 1520s. The Spanish entirely emptied the library and set its thousands of books of history, poetry, and medical and calendar information on fire. The spectacle of the burning books caused many Mexicas to commit suicide. The Spanish, shocked by the Mexicas' response, were unable to keep them from jumping from buildings or hanging themselves from trees. Were the suicides "protest"? Were they "resistance"? Were they a way of expressing and experiencing the profundity of the violence? And why were the Spanish shocked? What sort of response did they expect? The burning of the library was a performance by the Spanish, intended to show the watching Mexicas that this body of knowledge was not true and that this was an end to Mexica sovereignty. The Spanish, who had the geopolitical power to destroy the library, intended to replace the hole its loss left in the culture with their truth: that of Christianity. The Spanish were operating under the logic of salvation whereby the individual can, through (violent) revelation, change and be saved. Whatever complex meanings the Mexica suicides may carry, they were a counter-performance, rejecting the mandate that would centuries later be described as "kill the Indian and save the man." Rather than experience the destruction of the library as an enforced enactment of revelation and conversion, the Mexicas who committed suicide chose to destroy themselves as the books were destroyed, confounding the narrative of salvation by not allowing the Spanish to separate the Indian from Indian culture.

Many who survived the Spanish invasion also worked to subvert the Spanish narrative of conquest. In spite of the loss of their books, the Mesoamerican nations kept as much of their poetry and calendrical and historical knowledge as possible dynamically alive through oral transmission. See, for example, the excerpt from the Popol Vuh (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 19–20), the sacred book of the Quiché Maya, reconstructed from memory after its destruction. The Mexica and Mayan calendrical information was especially threatening to the Spanish, since it encompasses the "conquest" into complex cycles of change and return, thus folding Spanish presence into a cyclical whole that undoes both the rupture necessary for a linear teleology of salvation and the assurance of the eternal victory of the colonist. See, for example, the excerpts from the Mayan *Chilam Balam*, a book of prophecy that incorporates conversion to Christianity into the Mayan cycles of return, thus shattering the concept of linear time necessary to the narrative of salvation (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 20–2).

In their destruction of the Axtec, Mixtec, and Mayan libraries the Spanish were actually creating and choosing an archive – an anthology, if you will – of Mesoamerican literature. The Spanish spared 22 pre-"conquest" Mesoamerican books, chosen for their compliance with Spanish notions of truth and history. These remaining books have been cut and rebound to resemble European book forms and linear reading practices, and written over by Spanish commentators. If we can recognize the destruction of Native literature as violent colonial representation, how should we see the relationship between burning books written by Indians and writing books about Indians? The construction of colonial representation of Indians is a partner to the destruction of Indian representation. The paucity of texts by Native Americans and the intentional destruction of Native American languages and oral traditions correspond with the enormous number of texts written about Indians by colonists.

Native American cultures with no libraries to burn have complex histories and ways of knowing that were as threatening as the great libraries of Mesoamerica to the trajectory of the narrative of discovery. And cultures whose literatures were not contained in libraries available for torching proved just as slippery in colonial hands, their self-representations as difficult to line up and force to march in time. Louis Hennepin was a Belgian friar of the Recollect order, born in 1626. He accompanied La Salle on his first journey to the Mississippi River in 1679, was separated from the large exploratory party, and ended up being captured by and spending the winter of 1680–1 with the Lakota, where one family ceremonially "adopted" him. In 1683, back in Europe, Hennepin published *The Description of Louisiana* and its appendix, "The Manners of the Indians," a document that goes into abundant, sometimes dismissive, sometimes sympathetic detail about Lakota culture and also serves as an analysis of what might be necessary for the overthrow of that culture and the claiming of Lakota land. The Lakota have a rich history, which includes stories of the origin of people in general, and the Lakota Nation specifically. Nevertheless, Hennepin responded to the culture he encountered by denying them any self-knowledge, any conception of their own past. "I am no longer surprised at the

avowal of our historians," he writes, "that they cannot tell how the Indian country has been populated, since the inhabitants, who ought to be the best informed, know nothing about it themselves." He blames this perceived ignorance on illiteracy:

> If, in Europe, we were like them deprived of writing, and if we had not the use of that ingenious art, which brings the dead back to life, and recalls past times and which preserves for us an eternal memory of all things, we should not be less ignorant than they. (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 189)

Hennepin follows this self-congratulation with a fascinating admission:

> It is true that they recount some things about their origin; but when you ask whether what they say about it is true, they answer that they know nothing about it, that they would not assure us of it, and that they believe them to be stories of their old men, to which they do not give much credit. (Ibid)

Hennepin gives the Lakota the capacity to speak their own history, and then puts into the Lakota's mouths the dismissal of the very history they speak, thus staging the division of Native Americans from their own history and land as a voluntary abdication.

But if this is a staged scene of Native American self-abnegation, it is also a scene of Native American refusal of a European narrative. These Lakota informants refuse to defend, or accredit, the stories they tell: "they would not," Hennepin tells us, "assure us of it." They reject, in other words, the ethnographic economy of the explorer's desire to conquer history and culture as well as geography. Hennepin is shocked and frustrated that the Lakota won't stand up for their version, shocked because he cannot imagine a culture that would deny its own claim to a linear narrative of presence and possession, and frustrated because he needs the Lakota to assert their truth so that he can discount it in favor of his own. In fact, by refusing to grant their own stories the status of monolithic, monotheistic truth and by opening up the possibility of multiple realities, the Lakota could well be defending a far more complicated relationship of cultural production to geography, time, and belonging than Hennepin can imagine.

Hennepin's interlocutors do talk. They do tell their stories. And then they seemingly casually deny those stories any power that Hennepin might recognize, namely, "truth." The Lakota's refusal confounds the colonizer's desire to see Indian culture in its "untouched" form and then to redirect that culture, to convert it and set it upon the colonizer's narrative path. Can we say that the Lakota's proleptic discounting of their own stories' truth is a sort of textual terrorism? An assertion of the capacity of oral traditions to undermine written? An extinguishing of the power of word-for-wordrepetition and the pedagogy of "truth" that attaches to that repetition? A refusal of the easy rhyme between, say, "In sixteen hundred and seventy-nine" and "LaSalle said 'the Mississippi is mine?' " The rhyme between linear narrative and geographical conquest gets told, retold, and enjoys and incites its own retelling.

But can that rhyme be booby-trapped through the denial of knowledge, through shrugging off the imperial, imperious mantel of truth? Present-day Indian writers like Gerald Vizenor (Chippewa) and Thomas King (Cherokee) have theorized and enacted the possibility of exploding that rhyme through, for example, reiterative and looped narrative structures and trickster-driven interventions into the conventions of linear truth. Hennepin's story shows that these are tactics that have had efficacy all along, for the Lakota in particular and for Native Americans in general.

Hennepin goes further in describing his frustration with the Lakota in a section of his appendix entitled "Indifference of the Indians" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 192), showing Native Americans again eviscerating French truth through deed as well as word:

> They have so great an indifference for all things that there is nothing like it under heaven. They take great complacency in hearing all that is said to them seriously, and in all that they are made to do. If we say to them: "Pray to God, brother, with me," they pray and they repeat word for word all the prayers you teach them. "Kneel down," they kneel. "Take off your hat," they take it off. "Be silent," they cease to speak. "Do not smoke," they stop smoking. If one says to them: "Listen to me," they listen calmly. When we give them pictures, a crucifix or breads [*sic*], they use them as adornments just as if they were jewelry and array themselves in them, as though they were wampum. If I should say to them: "To-morrow is the day of prayer," they say, "Niaova." "See, that is right." If I said to them: "Do not get drunk," they answered: "There, that is right, I am willing." Yet the moment they receive drink from the French or Dutch, these latter never refusing them liquor for furs, they inevitably get drunk. (Ibid: 191)

The Mexicas destroy their bodies in the face of the destruction of their books, and the Lakota agree to enact the colonizer's truth, then refuse to make that enactment permanent. It is useful to read the Lakota's agreeable but impermanent bodily actions alongside the permanent refusal of the Mexicas who kill themselves while seeing their books burn. The Mexicas' suicide is a passionately active form of resistance to the colonizer's insistence on the truth of their narrative and the falsity of the Indians'. It refuses even the possibility of conversion to a different narrative and teleology. It insists that bodies of knowledge and bodies of people die together. The violence of the Mexicas' response is, on the surface, very different than the so-called "indifferent" response of the Lakota to Hennepin, but each is responding to European incursions into cultural production, and each circumvents the linear narrative of conversion, diverting the use to which the European wants to put Indian "literature." And by "literature," let us be clear that we are also talking about "order." A great deal of Hennepin's anxiety over the behavior of the Lakota has to do with their refusal to change permanently. They happily engage in a bodily performance of complicity in a given moment: praying, giving up drink, stopping smoking, all of which leads the French to think that they are making *progress* in changing Indian culture. But the Native Americans' refusal to maintain that performance across time bypasses the use to which the French want to put Indian narrative and cultural performance. Both the

Mexica and the Lakota responses to European cultural editing make a performative intervention into the colonizers' teleology of discovery and conquest. The Mexicas and the Lakota reject the coopting of their literature – either in its destruction or its reiteration by whites – for the construction of European linear narrative. They disrupt, in other words, the archiving by Europeans of Indian self-knowledge.

The Lakota who adopted Hennepin put it best, though Hennepin again characterizes their intervention into his narrative structure of truth as "indifference."

> On the part of the Indians the first obstacle to their Faith is the indifference which they feel for everything. When we relate to them the history of our Creation, and the mysteries of the Christian religion, they tell us that we are right and then they relate their fables and when we reply that what they say is not true they retort that they agreed to what we said and that it is not showing sense to interrupt a man when he is speaking and to tell him that he lies. "This is all very well," they say, "for your countrymen; for them it is as you say, but not for us, who belong to another nation" (Ibid: 193)

The Lakota insist that truth adheres differently to people of different civic, geographic, and cultural formations. Hennepin, driven by the goal of global conversion of humankind to Christianity, cannot accept the possibility of plural truths, nor can he accept the Lakota understanding of "nation" as an indissoluble if dynamic connection between culture, people, and land – an indissolubility that is, itself, a truth he cannot comprehend. Given that difference in all its various meanings is what is at stake in this encounter, it is interesting that Hennepin consistently calls the Lakota's complex capacity for multiple truths "indifference," which is the same word in the original French. Does he actually want the Lakota to be "different," that is to say, opposed, to what he says? This is remarkable, given that his end desire is for their conversion. But, in fact, Indian resistance is exactly what Hennepin requires. In order for conversion to occur, there must first be opposition, a "difference" that does not allow for its other, a "difference" that claims exclusive truth status. The Lakota do articulate their otherness, but also insist that, because they are of another nation, their truth makes no difference to the truth of the European. This is a vision of truth – a theory of literature, if you will – that protects Native cultural, political, and geographical sovereignty. It rejects the archival impulse that would allow Hennepin to use the difference he looks for as fuel for a European version of the past and the future. Hennepin can find no purchase in the Lakota's version of difference and therefore cannot stage the drama of revelation as the necessary precursor to conversion.

The Spanish who burn the Texcoco library and the Belgian friar adopted by the Lakota each experience surprise in the face of Indian refusal to participate in the teleology of discovery and salvation. But the sensation felt by the colonizer, the experience of total non-understanding in the face of Native American resistance, is in one very important sense immaterial. It does not lead to changed behavior, nor does it alter the narrative of conquest. The Indian refusals do not change either the colonizer's addiction to the colonizing narrative or the colonizer's drive to inscribe

that narrative onto bodies and geographies. The Spanish do not put out the fire and rebuild the library. Hennepin, when he is refused the truth of the stories he hears, immediately turns to another Lakota origin story and shows how it is a version of the "true" biblical story of Cain and Abel. This allows him to suggest that the Indians "are . . . of Jewish origin," a common theory at the time. The notion that the Indians are a lost tribe of Israel and that their origin stories can prove this *in spite* of the Lakota's own abdication of responsibility for those stories leads Hennepin to the so-called truth that really matters to him. The Indians, like the ancient Israelites, "have no fixed and settled abode" (ibid: 189). They come, like the Europeans, from the Old World, but unlike the Europeans they are nomadic. Hennepin uses his linear narrative of both history and travel to argue that neither Indian origin nor cultural practice gives them any more claim to sovereignty in the land than Europeans. In fact, under the logic that farmers make property through labor, Indians' so-called nomadic ways give them less claim to sovereignty.

These Mexica and Lakota examples can serve as bookends to a broad spectrum of Indian discursive and performative resistance to the colonizers' variously violent ways of destroying and discounting Native American cultural production. But if we name this wide spectrum "resistance," it is crucial that we then interrogate the value placed on reading for resistance. There are many lessons to be learned from Ixtlilxochitl's and Hennepin's accounts, among them exciting glimpses of Indian intervention into the machinery of colonialist discourse. But it is also crucial to realize that desiring to read for and collate Indian resistance might itself be a troubling desire. Hennepin *seeks* resistance from Indians – he wants them to put up their fists and defend their stories. That they refuse to offer him overt resistance momentarily disappoints and confuses him, but in the end matters not a jot to his project. He marches on with his articulation of white belonging and Indian rootlessness anyway. Which is not to say that resistance is futile or that looking for it is wrong. It is to say that looking for the resistant Indian is not *de facto* a counter-colonial move. The resistance of an Indian can merely give the satisfaction of seeing the Indian, making him visible, requiring that struggle for survival is legible. Indian resistance can be another name for white comfort: if the resistant Indian can be recorded *at least*, the logic goes, *there is this trace*. It is, however, a counter-colonial move to read from the principle that Native American culture and cultural production continues even and especially when the Indian is off-screen.

The colonized come to know the colonizers better than the colonizers know themselves, and Hennepin's winter with the Lakota and the conversations they shared taught the Lakota about French "indifference," too. Today, the Lakota, along with most other Native American nations, continue to face a powerful desire for conversion in their non-Native interlocutors. Now, as often as not, that desire for conversion is turned around. This time the desire is on the part of the traveler himself to convert, to become Indian through the practice of an often quickly learned hodge-podge of Indian religious ritual. What happens to our reading practice if we read Hennepin's encounter with the Lakota as an instance in the Lakota history of discursively resisting

the narrative of conversion, rather than as an instance in the history of French colonization? What happens if we read it as an instance when the Lakota exercised and honed discursive resistance to invading narrative desire *for* Indianness, a desire that continues to wander across Indian country and continues to want to be adopted into Indian families and to sit and talk with Indians and hear Indian stories of origin? Perhaps part of the challenge in reading for Indian resistance does lie in reading in ways that seem ahistorical, and in ways that rearrange the arcs of what our histories ask us to read for. Perhaps we need to focus on – in this instance – Lakota persistence and cultural dynamism, rather than merely looking at the Lakota in the instances when they play sidekick to the European narrative.

Another challenge lies in seeing as resistant – or at least as non-traitorous – Native American voices that are either entirely silent or that seem complicit. That implied opposite of resistance, complicity, has damned many Native Americans in the eyes of those looking only for the Indian who stands obviously and defiantly against cultural and spatial incursion. Many of these contested figures are women, raising the question of how gendered our readings of resistance are, and how complicated resistance becomes in the face of the sexual politics of colonization. La Malinche, Cortés' slave, concubine, lover, and translator, facilitated Spanish rule and violence; she also facilitated negotiation in the face of genocide. Her child fathered by Cortés is often called "the first Mexican." Is she a resistant figure? A foundational figure? A heroic figure? Pocahontas, who appears first in John Smith's *second* version of *The Generall History of Virginia*, has stood for generations as the figure of the willing woman and Christian convert through whose actions and body Virginian land passed to white hands. Was Pocahontas a bargaining chip between her father and the Virginian colonists? Was she a convert to English culture as well as Christianity? Can/should she be resuscitated as an agent figure? Kateri Tekakwitha was a Mohawk convert to Catholicism whose extreme self-flagellation and early death catapulted her into a contested bid for sainthood. Should we read her conversion as in conversation with Mohawk or French Catholic cultural mandates? How do we read the fact that her extreme Catholic practice discomfited her priests and incorporated Native American worldviews and rituals into Catholic religious ritual? Do we see a woman insisting that Catholicism change to accommodate Native American religious practice and that it be able to performatively encompass the enormity of Native American dispossession and loss?

What does it mean to convert – as each of the above figures did – to the colonizer's religion? What does it mean to serve as a translator and interlocutor – as each of the above figures did – between colonizer and colonized? What does it mean to have children – as two of the above figures did – with the colonizer? Who are those children and what are their places in the discursive contest between colonizer and colonized? The terms that all of these questions raise are curiously binary in nature and remarkably interchangeable – was this Indian woman *defending* her culture or *betraying* it? Was she resistant or complicit? These binaries repeatedly disallow Indian cultures to be in transition. The fact that these questions are often construed over, through, and across Indian women's bodies and their mixed race children shows that

what a simplistic fixation on Indian resistance does not allow is the complexity and dynamism of Native American cultural change, production, and survival – Indians are either compromising and dying off or they are defending and dying in the act.

The complexities that these questions raise are not usually what we mean when we think about resistance. Resistance is a word that implies a dialectic relationship with an invading force, and asks us to always look back, away from the subject seen to be resistant, to the invading force. We ask: did resistance work, or did it fail? Such a dialectic continues to drive a linear narrative in which Indian voices serve as punctuation to a Euro-American literary juggernaut. Reading for Indian resistance in an anthology of American literature demands that the reader be on her toes. For what meaning is she reading, and why? The Indian speaking or acting out against oppression holds a strange fascination that can be sentimental and sadistic in the same moment. The stoic Indian suffering silently in the face of incursion, the savage Indian indiscriminately gobbling up humans, the Indian weeping over the destruction of the environment, the pleading Indian begging to be allowed to disappear over the horizon, bereft of land, family, culture . . . the list goes on and is as endless as it is familiar. Representations of Indian resistance are ubiquitous and lead easily to a pleasing and limply benevolent sort of nostalgic sympathy.

Perhaps the most counterintuitive lesson to be gleaned from Ixtlilxochitl and Hennepin, then, is that looking for, finding, and analyzing Native American "resistance" has repeatedly been a colonialist project. Therefore, collecting and organizing literatures by and about Native Americans reveals and reenacts that colonialist discourse even as it critiques it. Colonists – and we must extend that term to include the present day – have looked for Indian resistance and have experienced a wide range of emotions upon finding it, from violent and genocidal retaliation, to shocked self-righteousness, to a nostalgic and weepy sympathy. Whatever the response, the colonizers' reaction to Indian resistance is rarely to change their own colonizing goals. Judging Native American resistance by its efficacy against colonial practice leads very quickly to the mistake of painting the history of Native American resistance as a series of lost wars – with "exceptions" like the Pueblo Rebellion and the Battle of Little Bighorn serving to strengthen the overall teleology of noble and predestined defeat. Figuring the Indian as resistant has been central to the efficacy and terrifying longevity of such stereotypes as, to continue the list begun above, the Indian princess, the drudge-like "squaw," the drunken chief, the last of the race . . . etc. The fact is, the figure of the resisting Indian – that favorite stock character of so many American literatures – has been and remains profoundly useful to the colonial project.

Writing in 1666 for an English audience of potential emigrants, many of whom would come as indentured servants, George Alsop sets out to describe a single Native American Nation, the Susquehannock, beginning with an admission that there are many hundreds of Native American Nations and that they differ enormously from one another. He makes this admission only to dismiss the possibility of accuracy. He admits that his facetious and caustic description – which includes cannibalism and child-sacrifice – is largely fictional:

> That it would be a most intricate and laborious trouble, to run (with a description) through the several Nations of Indians here in America, considering the innumerableness and diversities of them that dwell on this vast and unmeasured Continent: But rather then I'le be altogether silent, I shall do like the Painter in the Comedy, who being to limne out the Pourtraiture of the Furies, as they severally appeared, set himself behind a Pillar, and between fright and amazement, drew them by guess. (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 218)

This is as honest a portrait as any of the attraction and usefulness of the fictional figure of the Indian, specifically the Indian as a murderous, resistant fiend. Alsop's is a bloodcurdling fantasy of a nation of 7-foot tall warriors steeped in the gore of little children, and he employs it – as others would for generations to follow – to make the geography of Maryland *attractive* to settlers. It is a story that "limns" the Indians as resistive to an extreme – murderous, terrible, and forbidding. And yet – amazingly – this is a story told to merrily hail white folks to come and be emigrants to this land. It doesn't scare them off. It doesn't matter whether the Indians are passive, eager, homicidal, sexy, ugly, smart, stupid . . . any representation at all will do. As long as there *are* Indians, the land must exist and be available.

Alsop's emphasis upon representation itself shows us that this colonial writer, at least, understands that the invention of "the other" as a foil to the "self" *is* an invention. There are "real" Indians, he argues, with real cultures and languages that differ from one another. But attempting to represent *those* Indians is far too much trouble and what Alsop knows and reveals in his discussion of the mechanics (pillars and curtains) of representation is that what is important for potential immigrants to know about Indians is simply that they are there. He could try for accuracy or he could make up an easy fiction – the only thing that is not an option is to "be altogether silent." In talking about the New World you have to talk about Indians, but they don't have to be real. So long as Indians, divided from time and space and set adrift in representation, locate the story for the white reader/subject but are themselves radically dislocated and unlocatable, they are useful, whether they are handing the colonists turkeys or eating the colonists' children.

The trajectory of European discovery through empty space and towards a destiny has consistently been triangulated with the human figure of the Indian. The Indian waits on the shore to be either complicit or resisting, friendly or unfriendly, good or bad, savage or civilized, noble or dissolute. The Indian locates the story (*here I am discovering a New World and these Indians prove that I am here and not just pretending in my back garden*) and keeps it interesting (*observe them in their strange habits and beliefs*), but – very importantly – the Indian also remains figurative, an example, never a specific. The Indian, in other words, grounds the story of European colonization for the colonial reader/subject, but is never, himself, grounded. The trick for the colonial observer, whether writing or reading about Indians or listening to or reading or burning Indian cultural production, is always to keep the juggling balls of space, time, and Indians in the air, never touching, never lining up to show the coordinates

of Native American cultural and geographical sovereignty, but instead always driving the narrative of colonization.

To return, then, to the so-called beginning, this time with Columbus' journey framed by his actually leaving from and arriving in historically embedded cultures and geographies. Back in Spain, 1492 was a watershed year as well. That year marked the expulsion of the Jews from Spain *and* the end of a 700-year Christian project of "reconquest," the Moors were pushed out, killed or forcibly converted. It was a process of ethnic and cultural cleansing that figured the Christian Spanish as indigenous sufferers of political, cultural, religious, and economic invasion by heathen outsiders. This domestic struggle spurred Christian Spain's sense of its global destiny as the converters, conquerors, and economic beneficiaries of heathen nations abroad. Pushed by the "trade winds" and fueled financially and discursively by the colonial obsessions of Spain in particular and an expanding Europe in general, Columbus and his crew did, indeed, sail the ocean blue. Upon arrival, Columbus met, traded with, and kidnapped people from a handful of island cultures. We don't know how far or how quickly the news of his visit spread among the people of the Western hemisphere whom Columbus named "Indians." The story we can analyze discursively is actually the spread of information in Europe, which began in1493, when Columbus wrote a letter announcing that he had managed to reach Asia by traveling west from Europe, and describing the people he met there. Within months that letter had been translated into several languages, printed, and disseminated across Europe, setting into motion the myth not only of Columbus and his exploits, but of what the lands he had traveled to might mean for Europeans, and who the people might be whom he had encountered.

Columbus had bumped into what would come to be known as "America," a vast collection of islands and continents five times the size of Europe. In his effort to describe the people he meets, Columbus lays the foundations for a bipartite structure of stereotype: the good Indian and the bad Indian. The good Indian is "by nature fearful and timid" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 25). Columbus' expansion upon this theme outlines half of the recipe for the dismissal of Native cultures for centuries to come:

> It frequently happened when I sent two or three of my men to some of the villages, that they might speak with the natives, a compact troop of the Indians would march out, and as soon as they saw our men approaching, they would quickly take flight, children being pushed aside by their fathers, and fathers by their children. (Ibid: 25)

Indian men are, in this portrait, unable to maintain civic and familial order. If the good Indian man is credulous, childlike, unreasonable, and incapable of civic or military leadership, good Indian women are drudges and "appear to work more than the men" (ibid: 26). Indians in general are "like persons with no reason," happy to exchange something (gold) for nothing ("pieces of plates" and "shoe-straps") and, although some are "seized by force" (ibid: 25) by Columbus and taken without

warning from their homes forever, they persist in "believing that I descended from heaven."

The good Indian must have his counterpart in the bad Indian, and Columbus does admit that not all the Indians are peaceful and childlike and easy to steal. One island, Columbus states,

> is inhabited by a certain people who are considered very warlike by their neighbors. They eat human flesh. The said people have many kinds of row-boats, in which they cross over to all the other Indian islands, and seize and carry away every thing that they can. They differ in no way from the others, only that they wear long hair like the women. They use bows and darts made of reeds, with sharpened shafts fastened to the larger end, as we have described. On this account they are considered warlike, wherefore the other Indians are afflicted with continual fear, but I regard them as of no more account than the others. (Ibid: 26)

This is a terrifying description, and one that, along with the description of the "good Indian," will haunt the representation of Native Americans for the following five centuries and more. However, Columbus insists that it is "the other Indians" who are "afflicted with continual fear" of the cannibals, *not* himself. In fact, in spite of their seeming total difference from the friendly, curious creatures who happily show Columbus around and accept his trinkets, Columbus "regard(s) them as of no more account than the others." Here, in the first European letter describing the "New World," Columbus anticipates Alsop's thesis about the fundamental inconsequentiality of Native American resistance to the end result of the colonial project. "Good" and "Bad" Indians are necessary to the narrative, but in the end, it doesn't matter at all whether a particular group is good or bad. The good and bad may fight among themselves, the good may facilitate colonization and the bad may get in the way, but getting in the way can be good, too, as it allows for narrative reasons for enslavement, removal, and genocide. In the end, neither the good nor the bad is really of any "account" at all – what *is* of account for Columbus is the land and its potential for generating wealth. Whether the Indians cooperate or resist doesn't matter to Columbus or his cultural inheritors except to the extent that Indian behavior locates the European colonial project and effects the excitement of the story of how the European got where he was going.

What *doesn't matter* to Columbus is exactly what has to matter when thinking about reading for Indian resistance. His two fallacies – that the Americas are actually Asia and that the indigenous people of the Americas are actually Indians – structure and set into motion the trajectory of colonial discourse and structure the terms of Native American discursive resistance. There were earlier transatlantic and perhaps transpacific voyages – certainly by Europeans and very possibly by Americans, Asians, and Africans – than Columbus' voyage of 1492. There was knowledge of the peoples of other continents, however we may dismiss it as mythic, in Africa, America, Asia, and Europe. Nevertheless we consistently trace the long, often violent and always terribly

complex relationship between the people indigenous to the Americas and the people of the rest of the world to a moment of spatial and cultural misrecognition on the part of a man who would *never* afterwards admit his mistake. As we all know, Columbus miscalculated the size of the globe. The islands he bumped into were not Asia but the harbingers of a vast geography inhabited by millions of human beings living in thousands of different cultural configurations and speaking hundreds of different languages. Columbus' misrecognition of everything and everyone he met and his insistence that both the land and the people were *elsewhere* is a familiar story. His mistake was quickly "corrected" – that is, the lands he "discovered" were incorporated into the narrative thrust of Christian expansion into a "New World" – by the ever-increasing numbers of Europeans who set out to make their livings either from or in that world. Nevertheless, Columbus' mistake – that the land he ran into and the people he met were not where and who they themselves believed they were – has had enormous resonance in the practices of colonization and Indian resistance to it. His stubborn adherence to his "truth" is a useful blueprint for the stubborn adherence of other Europeans to a linear narrative of conquest across both time and space. Columbus is venerated for being wrong and for being obdurate, venerated as an inflexible parent whose particular beliefs may be seen as silly, but whose inflexibility itself is upheld as a useful family value. The human figure of the "Indian" carries the stamp of Columbus' geographic mistake and bears the discursive burden of Columbus' legacy of a stubborn adherence to a linear truth. Native American discursive resistance to the linear teleology of discovery – the fight on display in the pages of anthologies – is the fight, in word and deed, for cultural existence and spatial belonging in the face of blind misrecognition and disbelief on the part of the colonizers. It is the battle against the easy coupling of "you are not you" with "you are not here."

The teleology of an anthology both reveals the continuing power of that two-fisted attack and invites counter-readings that reveal and derive from Native American resistance. The challenge is not to decide whether or not to decry or advocate reading for resistance; it is rather to read for resistance and to refuse the temptation to rest there. Reading should not come to rest with resistance, and similarly readers should not imagine that resistance provides rest or respite. Take, for example, Mittark's 1681 *Agreement of Gay Head Indians Not to Sell Land to the English* (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 351). In this text the Wampanoag of "Gay Head," which they have successfully restored to its Wampanoag name, Aquinnah, on Martha's Vineyard establish a collective response to English advances on their land. By rejecting notions of private property ownership and by asserting the primacy of the group, the Wampanoag's agreement stymies the teleology of English conquest: it is thrilling to contemplate the fact that a great deal of Aquinnah – on an island off the coast of Massachusetts, a chunk of land at the far eastern edge of the so-called New World – remains Wampanoag land to this day. But the Aquinnah Wampanoag's cultural and discursive negotiations have had to extend far beyond the remarkable accomplishment that this document records. Christianity and intermarriage with white and African American

communities on the island have prompted contemporary detractors to suggest that, although the Aquinnah Wampanoag have kept land, they have lost their race, their culture and their standing. This cynical and opportunistic rejection of Native American cultural dynamism and integrity once again taps into the force of the teleology of salvation, claiming that the Aquinnah Wampanoag's successful 1681 political resistance was no resistance at all. It serves as a reminder that when we read for resistance in *The Literatures of Colonial America* we are glimpsing the smoke of discursive fires that continue across Native national histories and in the living cultures of Native Americans today, *here* and *now*.

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11
Refocusing New Spain and Spanish Colonization: Malinche, Guadalupe, and Sor Juana

Electa Arenal and Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel

Oh, why did she eat
– that first married woman –
Oh, why did she eat
The forbidden fruit?
That first married woman
– She and her husband –
Have brought our Lord down
To a humble abode
Because they both ate
The forbidden fruit.
(From the ending of a 1538 missionary conversion play, Motolinía 1950: 240)

The New World and New Spain

The epigraph to this essay translates a ten line poem written in Spanish, the ending of a play about Adam and Eve performed in Nahuatl and used to explain Christianity to new indigenous converts by having them enact biblical stories. One of the earliest poems published in New Spain, the text invites multiple interpretations. The textured socioreligious context in which this and other colonial works were produced requires richly faceted readings. A first reading witnesses the attempt to inculcate traditional Christian misogyny in the minds of the conquered through the reference to original sin originating with Eve (Johnson 1983: 213). On a second reading, we notice that both the woman and her husband bring the Lord to the "humble abode" of humanity, making possible the evangelization project and offering an ideological justification of the conquest. At the same time, the text imposes a new

structuring of the roles played by men and women, through gendered concepts of good and evil unfamiliar to the people on whom they were forced. The theatrical performance may have introduced rather than clarified confusions: the Spaniards who railed against sodomy insisted that all the characters, male and female, be played by men. Gender, representation, and visibility were at odds, starting with the first phase of the colonization of the Americas.

From the earliest moments of the encounters and clashes between the Spanish-speaking Europeans and the myriad indigenous groups of a very old "New World" (each with its own languages and dialects), women were active and vitally important, if often overshadowed, ignored, and idealized. The ships themselves left Europe and sailed into the wind with carved female figures leading the way on their prows. Indigenous cosmography placed women and men, not in hierarchic binary oppositions, but rather in a relationship of interdependent duality (Quezada 1996: 19–21). "Colonization" brought a collision of divergent sex/gender systems and ways of governing and symbolizing the body politic as well as the bodies and sexualities of members of all the societies involved.

This essay proposes a "refocusing." It retells the history of New Spain, placing at its center three female icons: La Malinche, the Virgin of Guadalupe, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Our analysis seeks to broaden understanding of the colonial period by redefining the context in which these historical figures acquired significance. Each of them facilitates the study of a particular phase of the viceroyalty of New Spain. La Malinche, for example, allows us to work with questions of gender, transculturation, and colonial power during the first years of conquest, colonization, and subjugation of indigenous peoples. The Virgin of Guadalupe, on the other hand, illuminates processes of creolization and syncretism in the production of a regional culture that prefigures national discourses predominant after the independence of Mexico. Finally, Sor Juana opens up an exploration of women's agency and their place within historical, literary, and cultural arenas, as well as of the development of an alternative epistemology in the New World.

Background: On Naming the Americas

Christopher Columbus' arrival in the Americas – which he called Cipango, thinking he was on an island described by Marco Polo in his *Travels* – was the culmination of a series of journeys purportedly to explore new and unknown routes to Asia. With the "discovery" of the "New World" in 1492, according to some scholars, came the initial conception of what is currently known as the modern, imperialist world. The difficult process of naming spaces resulted in confusions, as European conquerors continually imposed "new" names, geographic names already in use in Europe, on the recently "discovered" zones. Frequently, they ignored or altered the names given by inhabitants who had been living there for centuries. Topographical names inspired by places in Spain such as New Galicia; by royal personages, like Fernandina; by novels of

chivalry – Florida – and especially by religious figures and concepts such as Santa Fe and Trinidad, abound in the Americas of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Innumerable names assigned by the original peoples – for example, Quisqueya or Tlatelolco – seemed to resist being supplanted and were kept by the intruders.

Regarding Spain's geopolitical organization of the territories ceded to it by the papacy in 1494, we must note that the Spaniards met up with two astoundingly developed and complex centers – empires in their own right. Following, in part, ancient Roman practice (although allowing much less autonomy), it officially reorganized them as viceroyalties. The northern zone became the Viceroyalty of New Spain (1535–1821), which included Mexico and most of Central America and what are now the states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Texas, New Orleans, and Florida in the US. The southern zone became the Viceroyalty of Peru (1543–1821), which included the western Andean region, today's Peru, Ecuador, and parts of Bolivia and Chile. Each was assigned a viceroy, that is, a representative of or surrogate for the king, and a cadre of officials, religious and secular, who served limited terms before having to leave office and either return to Spain or serve elsewhere in the empire. In the eighteenth century, the area that is today Colombia, Panama, and Venezuela was called New Granada (1717–23; 173–1819) and Argentina, Paraguay, and Uruguay became the Viceroyalty of La Plata (1776–1810) (see figure 11.1).

The expedition that reached Mexico in 1519, led by the restless, talented, and self-promoting Hernán Cortés, marks the official beginning of Spanish colonization of *tierra firme*, the term used for the continental Americas, to distinguish between it and the island territories from which mainland conquests were launched. It was Cortés – in one of his astute letter-reports to the Spanish Crown – who renamed the area that is today Mexico and Central America, "New Spain."

The sometimes arbitrary but often purposeful process of colonial naming was one of the first steps in what Edmundo O'Gorman (1961) defines as the "invention of América." It reflects the intimate relationship between language and power in the European colonial/imperial project. In the highly gendered lexicon (vocabulary) and grammar of the Romance languages, this relationship is particularly salient. Spanish place naming, often feminine – as in "América"/"las Américas" and "las Indias," as well as images and texts – reflected, sometimes in subtle ways, the conceptions of gender of the early modern period.

Refocusing on Women and Gender

The relatively new fields of women's and gender studies challenge us to reconsider frameworks and *mentalités* (mindsets); to rethink and revise major as well as lesser known texts tracing the presence of women and other minorities. The convoluted rationales used to subject women have often been similar to those justifying the treatment of conquered territories and populations:



FIGURE 11.1 Map of Spanish American viceroyalties.

> Columbus' "Indies" – a feminized and ultimately eroticized sign, desired and reviled – was inscribed into the Columbian exchange as a feminine value, intended for consumption in a cultural economy where discovery means gaining an advantage by uncovering a weakness, and femininity is synonymous with exploitability. (Zamora 1993: 179)

In the texts and illustrations through which we know about the four voyages of Columbus and the men who sailed west with him in quest of a new route to the east, and also in those about subsequent early voyages, we find inscriptions of unconscious as well as conscious gender assumptions. Women are spoken of as animals in a striking passage from the diary of the fourth voyage. Columbus writes that he is about to ship a group of native men back to Europe:

> I sent [men] to a house that is to the west of the river, and they brought *seven head of women*, counting young ones and adults, and three boys. This I did because men behave better in Spain having women from their country than without them. (Quoted in Zamora 1993: 177; emphasis added)

"America" soon became the preferred name of the so-called New World of which the Europeans considered themselves discoverers (figure 11.2). In a famous drawing by Jan van der Straet (ca. 1575) relating to the naming of America after Amerigo Vespucci, this cartographer is portrayed as a fully clothed warrior-explorer, banner in one hand, astrolabe in the other. In contrast, the personified continents and islands of America are represented as the seductively welcoming, semi-clothed, pagan beauty. Above her outstretched arm, in the distance, a human leg is being roasted by her fellow natives, a detail long overlooked by scholarly observers of the print (Zamora 1993: 152–4).

A gendered perspective that allows us to see the colonialist and sexist attitudes embedded in pictorial narratives such as van der Straet's drawing, underpins our "refocusing" and makes visible dimensions of the colonial experience that have remained obscured in hegemonic accounts of the conquest and colonization, particularly in New Spain.

Malinche, the Virgin of Guadalupe, and Sor Juana

> There are three figures in Mexican history that embody the most extreme and diverse possibilities of femininity. Each one of them represents a symbol, exercises a vast and profound influence on very wide sectors of the nation, and arouses passionate reactions. These figures are the Virgin of Guadalupe, Malinche, and Sor Juana. (Castellanos 1988: 222)

It is commonly thought that colonial Mexico can be properly understood by studying the *relaciones* (official reports or depositions), histories, and chronicles written by Hernán Cortés, Bernal Díaz del Castillo, Bartolomé de Las Casas, Bernardino de Sahagún, and Francisco López de Gómara, among others. Rosario Castellanos was



FIGURE 11.2 *America*. Engraving by Theodor Galle after a drawing by Jan van der Straet [Stradanus], ca. 1575. From Stradanus, *Nova Reperta* (ca. 1580). Photograph by permission of the Burndy Library.

one of the earliest intellectuals to claim otherwise. Although viceregal (and most) history and culture continue to be presented through perspectives made authoritative by patriarchal and patristic imperial traditions, from the beginning a few critics and writers were, like Castellanos, concerned with the silenced and forgotten. In recent decades there has been a marked increase in finding, piecing together, and incorporating the accounts of those whose "voice" remained unheard.

Among the neglected but productive members of colonial society are women of all castes and classes, indigenous people, enslaved and free people of African descent, and poor, *mestizo* men. They express themselves not only through the spoken or written word, but also through painting, sculpture, music, dance, metal and woodwork, weaving and embroidery, ceramics, agriculture, and cooking. Additional sources for hearing these "others" include legal depositions, inquisitional records, letters, and wills (Bennett 2003; Méndez 1997).

Many outstanding studies of female participation in culture have been published in the last thirty years, but most have not reached the mainstream. We follow the lead of scholars striving to overcome the still significant lag in the incorporation and dissemination of the new or newly uncovered or reinterpreted knowledge. Here we refocus and look at the enormously rich culture of sixteenth and seventeenth-century New Spain through the powerful and emblematic Malintzín (la Malinche, Doña Marina), the Virgin of Guadalupe, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. These three female

figures traditionally exemplified the different productive (and reproductive) roles open to women in the constitution of a conformist patriarchal national identity. Today, they are linked to the foundational discourses of a contemporary Mexican and even Chicana identity (Cypess 1991).

We are not the first to speak of the three women together. As the passage quoted above demonstrates, Rosario Castellanos connected them in the 1960s. In pointing to the "passionate reactions" they elicit, she signals rebellions against conformity. Castellanos was a precursor to the second wave of the international women's movement and the establishment of the discipline of women's studies, both of which opened spaces for new visions and revisions: the rescue of Malinche from the distorting label of whore/traitor; of Guadalupe from her projection as a paragon of passivity, purity, and submission; and of Sor Juana from the narrow confines of the Olympian pedestal of the muse.

Malinche is a historical figure transformed into a myth. In the positive depictions of her participation in the conquest of New Spain she is a mediator and strategist, cultural and biological mother of the new Mexican, Latin American, and Latino/a *mestizo* identity. Negative reconstitutions of her role, elaborated after the nineteenth-century wars of independence, see her as a traitor and as a disdained victim of the sexual violence that engendered the self-derogatory and neocolonial attitudes of the present. The colloquial term *malinchista*, an insult used against those who prefer things foreign, derived from such symbolic projections.

Malinalli/Malinche/Marina/Malintzín is well known in the history of colonial Mexico, and yet there are still lacunae in the biographical data (Cypess 1991; Baudot 2001). She was probably born in 1502 or 1505, on the day called Malinal – thus her original name of Malinalli. In many accounts she is said to have been born in Painalla, close to Coatzacoalcos, in the state of Veracruz. Most historians believe that she belonged to a noble indigenous family. As a young girl she was given to or exchanged with Mayan traders that later passed her on to the Tabascans. Malinalli's life is a vivid example of the common practice of politically or culturally motivated exchanges of women among different ethnic groups or tribes. Some historians believe she was given away by her widowed and remarried mother to protect the inheritance of a younger child, a son.

On March 12, 1519, Hernán Cortés received 20 women as a gift; among them was Malintzín. Originally assigned to Alonso Hernández Portocarrero, she soon became Cortés' woman and, most importantly, his translator. In 1522 she gave birth to Martín Cortés, son of Hernán Cortés, and she herself was baptized under the name of Marina. It is believed that Malintzín was a name created in Nahuatl as an adaptation of her new Christian name (Cypess 1991: 33), from which Malinche was in turn derived later, as a Hispanization of Malintzín. The constant process of creation, re-creation, and translation of her name – Malintzín/Malinche/Marina – provides an excellent example of the effervescent multicultural and multilingual context of the early phase of the conquest in the Americas.

Doña Marina was the name used when Malinche received three *encomiendas* (grants of land and Indians) and two pieces of land. Cortés did not hesitate, nevertheless,

before marrying her off to Juan Jaramillo (with whom she had a daughter named María), when his Spanish wife, Catalina Juárez, arrived in Mexico. Archival research conducted by Georges Baudot suggests three possible years of her death: 1539, 1541, and 1551. Both her son and daughter were married to Spaniards and led lives as legitimate members of Spanish society in New Spain, part of a burgeoning new, hiddenly *mestizo*, aristocracy (Kuznesof 1995).

Hernán Cortés mentions "La Malinche" only twice in his *cartas de relación*, a telling example of the semi-unconscious exclusion of women from historiographic discourse. He stresses her function as a translator (*lengua*, tongue) of the verbal exchanges taking place between Spanish conquerors and indigenous chiefs, and states that Marina always traveled with him during the early phase of the conquest. His reticence about speaking of her in his *cartas*, therefore, is all the more striking. In "The Second Letter" he says that Malinche revealed to him news of the conspiracy of Cholula, from which we reconstruct her collaboration as a strategist and adviser. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, her symbolic image as traitor to her people was crystallized from this very episode.

Historical and sociopolitical conditions at the time of the conquest lead us to reject the popular myth. The downfall of the Aztec empire was a result of internal divisions already existing in its political structure, combined with the sudden decrease in numbers of the indigenous populations due to warfare and the spread of communicable diseases that Spaniards brought to the Americas, and against which the native populations had no natural defenses (Cypess 1991: 14–25).

In his *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* (1576), the Spanish chronicler Bernal Díaz del Castillo wrote an account of Malinche – much fuller than Cortés' – in which he sketched a brief biography, identifying Doña Marina as the daughter of "great lords" from Paynala, and describing the family reunion of the "lost daughter" with her mother and brother after they all had become Christians (chapter 37). Stressing Marina's allegiance to Christianity, he compares her story with that of the biblical "Joseph and his brothers in Egypt," and underscores the primacy of her role as a translator:

> Returning to the matter at hand, Doña Marina knew the language of Coatzacoalcos, which is that of Mexico, and she knew the Tabascan language also . . . This was the great beginning of our conquests and thus, thanks be to God, things prospered with us. I have made a point of telling this story, because without Doña Marina we could not have understood the language of New Spain and Mexico. (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 41)

Beyond emphasizing her significant intervention in the success of the conquest of Mexico, Bernal Díaz portrays Malinche/Marina's role from a dual perspective: (1) that of interpreter/translator, usually invoked by the epithet "Cortés, [speaking] through Doña Marina" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 43, 45, 50); and (2) that of consort whose name became the main identifier of the Spanish leader for the natives; Moctezuma repeatedly refers to Cortés as "lord [*señor*] Malinche" (Castillo and

Schweitzer 2001: 43, 45, 46, 49, 51, 56). Apparently small, the detail catches divergent notions of gender operating in the two worlds: the Christian name is used to refer to women in a subservient role, while the indigenous name used by Moctezuma to refer to Cortés probably points to the gender complementarity predominant in the Aztec world.

In indigenous narratives and visual accounts of the conquest we find, in fact, a more historic projection of Malinche. Most of them acknowledge her privileged social status among the Amerindians, suggest through her size and place in graphic illustrations that she is of noble descent, and leave us with the impression that her function as a translator was not seen as a simple act of treason. The indigenous representations take into consideration the internal divisions between indigenous groups before and after the arrival of Cortés to Mexico in 1519. Pre-Hispanic sociopolitical systems included independent states, such as that of the Tlaxcalans, and other rivals and allies of the Aztecs.

Indigenous depictions of Malinche reflect these diverse political alliances of the natives *vis-à-vis* the Spaniards. The graphic illustrations of *Florentine Codex* (1555) and the *Lienzo de Tlaxcala* (ca. 1550) represent Marina wearing an indigenous garment, a *huipil*, standing or sitting in a prominent position by Cortés' side, usually exercising her diplomatic and translation skills. In several images, Marina is the object of respectful rituals and offerings similar to the ones performed for Cortés (see front cover illustration). (For a detailed analysis of the visual representations of Malinche in indigenous texts, see Brotherson 1979; Gruzinski 1992).

Malinche/Marina and many other indigenous subjects acted simultaneously as servants, obeying commands and seeing after their masters' needs, and as what Fanon describes as intermediaries between the native populations and the representatives of the colonial enterprise (Fanon 1991: 152). Her historical meaning is ambivalent and complex, regardless of whether she is seen as an innocent victim, an active or neutral go-between, or a despicable traitor to her native origins. It is perhaps because of the density of her historical persona that the Malinche continues to be a source of fascination and anxiety for many contemporary Mexican and Chicano artists.

While Malinche, the historical woman, played a major role in both the peaceful and the violent meetings between Europeans and indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica, the Virgin de Guadalupe is an ubiquitous religious icon that fuses indigenous goddess worship and official evangelism. She is portrayed as a miraculous healer, and in his non-fiction work *The Buried Mirror* (1992) Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes calls her the symbolic mother of the orphaned indigenous peoples.

The Virgin Mary arrived in the form of engravings, paintings, medallions, and wooden sculptures carried onto the ships, as well as in the seafarers' prayers, dreams, and visions (Alberro 1997: 316). Some of the men who traveled with Cortés remembered the Virgin of Guadalupe of Extremadura, the Spanish province where they were born. Like the transplanted Spanish roses that thrived in the new earth, numerous Marys – most prominently *la Virgen de los Remedios* and la *Virgen de Guadalupe* – flourished among Catholic newcomers, and soon afterwards among the indigenous

and African converts. The Virgin of Guadalupe of both Spain and New Spain was called the *Virgen morena* (the Black Virgin). Actual images, however, leave her race in doubt. The Virgin in the Extremadura church may seem black because of the darkened wood on which she was painted. The Virgin of Tepeyac painted on cloth is depicted as light skinned, as are most of the copies, despite her epithet (see figure 11.3).

The miraculous image of the Virgin of Guadalupe, which she is said to have imprinted on the *tilma* or cloak of an indigenous convert, a *macehual* or commoner, has inspired innumerable copies and variations. Historians report that it was the work of an "inspired artist," the indigenous painter Marco de Aquino, who Bernal Díaz compared to Michelangelo (Brading 2001: 275). In the 1960s a Maryknoll priest found in a little church in Guatemala a collection of 400-year-old musical scores and Nahuatl songs written on deerskin, a fusion of indigenous and Renaissance European harmonies and instrumentation (Berger 1999: 63). Altars, sermons, prayers, and songs, along with countless images, continue to be created in her honor. Controversies have raged over depictions by modern artists who take her out of her religious context to use her image for aesthetic purposes. In some cases, they have been accused of disrespect or even blasphemy.

The Virgin of Guadalupe is an example of idealized womanhood, and of the domestication of a religious symbol. Under her protective aura thousands of women (as well as men) were incorporated into the imperial colonization and postcolonization process. Clearly, this generous, embracing Mother fulfilled a vital role for nearly the entire population. The figure of God's Mother found easier acceptance than that of her Son among the natives.

Gonzalo Fernández Oviedo, in *Historia general y natural de las Indias*, records a little-discussed but amazing episode in 1524/5 in which Antonio de Zuazo, a jurist friend of Cortés who appointed him chief judge, is visited by four Nahuatl scholars. Zuazo, in his zeal, had ordered that men who resisted conversion be *perreados* (killed by dogs) and had helped the Franciscans destroy indigenous idols. Distressed, native leaders (*caciques*) sent their sages to see the judge. The wise elders engaged Zuazo in a discussion of the parallels and correlations of their religious beliefs. Intrigued and stumped by their sophisticated theological questions, Zuazo asked them to come back on another day to give him a chance to pray for answers to their challenge. The final part of Oviedo's narrative has the wise men agreeing to be baptized on condition that Zuazo sponsor them (be their *padrino*) and that they be allowed "to venerate the image of Our Lady the Virgin Saint Mary, because they were not able to understand God and his image well" (Martínez-Baracs 1997: 302; our translation).

During the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the Virgen de los Remedios was also widely venerated. In analyzing the structural similarities and differences in the devotional stories of the Remedios and Guadalupe Virgins, Solange Alberro (1996) describes them as "almost twin sisters" for more than a century. Both reportedly appeared on hills north of Mexico City (the old Tenochtitlan) early – in 1528 and 1531, respectively – in places where the autochthonous mother goddess Toci-Tonantzin was worshiped; both are related to rains, although in opposite ways –

Remedios to bringing them in times of drought, Guadalupe to drying them up in times of floods; both appeared to recently converted natives named Juan, each on his way to a Franciscan monastery; Juan del Aguila uses his *tilma* to protect the Remedios figure that has been misplaced under a maguey (a large cactus plant), and Guadalupe imprints her image on Juan Diego's *tilma*; the two Virgins were originally related to miraculous appearances and popularly venerated in Spain. Finally, both Virgins had crossed the sea with men seeking gain, fame, salvation, or escape – Remedios in a documented sculpted image, Guadalupe in the mental and spiritual recollection of numerous Spaniards.

By the mid 1700s the fervently and synchronously revered Remedios and Guadalupe were gradually separated by sociopolitical and demographic dynamics and the vagaries of religious syncretism. Among the differences between the two virgins that helped determine the predominance of the Virgin of Guadalupe is the fact that while the Virgin of Remedios is always portrayed with the baby Jesus in her arms, the Virgin of Guadalupe is alone, emphasized in her ideal purity. In the images created at Extremadura in Spain she also carried the baby Jesus in her arms. But in New Spain those who promoted devotion to her – in what Alberro (1997: 328) calls a "visionary stroke of genius"– transformed her into an Immaculate Conception. Her own exemption from original sin is thus underscored; her divine, celestial form highlighted. The lessons to be learned from the rebuke of Eve, the "first wife," heard in the verses of our opening epigraph from the Nahuatl conversion play, are given in the carefully reproduced images of the unblemished Mary (Alberro 1997: 328–9). She is a symbol of untainted beauty, called "Phoenix," viewed in heavenly bliss, ready to be popularized by priests and poets – including Sor Juana – as *la maravilla de América* (the Marvel of America).

The interpretation of the texts that tell the story of the Virgin of Guadalupe's miraculous appearances at Tepeyac, and the question of connections that can be made with Toci-Tonantzin, the ancient goddess who was worshiped there, are still debated. People disagree over whether or not the early Guadalupan chapel anteceded the miraculous appearances. Tepeyac was a crossroads for going to and from Mexico City and other parts of Mexico – not an inconvenient place for missionary churchmen anxious to advance the work of conversion – and sensitive to the devastations wrought by the invasions – to encourage belief in a Virgin Mary, by whom even the most downtrodden could feel recognized and protected.

Historical documentation is scarce until over a century after the miraculous appearance on the hill of Tepeyac, during which the Virgin sent Juan Diego Cuautlatoatzin as a messenger to the archbishop with the order – couched as a request – for a shrine honoring her to be built on that site. Four appearances were said to have taken place in 1531, but the months and days of the miracles were changed several times before the first full narratives of the events were published in 1648 in Spanish and in 1649 in Nahuatl (from which the selection in Castillo and Schweitzer (2001) is taken). While no one denies the strength of popular veneration of the Virgin of Guadalupe, everyone admits that for centuries she was a pawn in the internecine



FIGURE 11.3 Our Lady of Guadalupe, sixteenth century. Basílica de Tepeyac, Mexico.

battles within the church over the traditions and the miraculous apparitions (Taylor 2003; Brading 2001; Alberro 1997).

Miguel Sánchez's 1648 *Imagen de la Virgen María* (Image of the Virgin Mary), full of biblical and patristic influences, emphasizes the Virgin's role in the providential (preordained) conquest of the Americas and won most favor among criollo (creoles or Spaniards born and raised in the Americas) readers. It justified the conquest and spiritually rationalized creole existence as part of a greater divine plan while speaking the language of the religious culture into which they were born. Luis Lazo de la Vega's 1649 *Huei tlamahuiçoltica* (Great miracle) underscored the connections with the native culture and was written with Nahuatl speakers in mind. Although dates of the celebrations of the Guadalupan feast days changed over time, from the beginning, criollos and natives performed their rituals in their own manner and on separate days.

In sum, the legend and the image of the Virgen of Guadalupe became rooted in the imagination, thinking, emotions, and religious vision of indigenous, African, creole, and even some Spanish inhabitants of New Spain. Yet momentous controversies surrounding the cult of the holy image have spanned the centuries, at times accidentally illustrating stark class and ethnic divisions despite a veneer of unity. A nineteenth-century bishop objected to the inordinately popular 1895 coronation of the Virgin of Guadalupe and was caught in the slippery terrain of ecclesiastic politics. He claimed that the scandal he caused "would not affect the Indians, who 'always have to look for their Tonantzin, the mother of Huitzilopochtli, and not the Mother of Jesus Christ' " (Brading 2001: 288–310, 307). The church's interest in amplifying its spiritual patronage and leadership helps explain why, despite controversy – the opposition of the abbot of the chapter at Tepeyac to the beatification and canonization of Juan Diego, and the lack of irrefutable proof of the Indian visionary's historical existence – the Vatican sainted Juan Diego in 2002 (ibid: 333–41).

Our third major female presence in the development of a Mexican national identity, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648/51–95), is also a significant figure in world literature. In 1680 she was chosen – for her literary prowess – to design and create the explanatory text for one of two triumphal arches constructed to welcome the 28th Viceroy of New Spain and his wife to Mexico City. As far as we know, Sor Juana is the only woman in history to author such a text. The arch for which she invented the text was a five-storey structure, inserted on the western portal of the cathedral, a theatrical set-like edifice adorned with 14 emblematic paintings, each with a motto on painted ribbon and an epigram on a shield (for images, see Santillán 2000). She also wrote the 298-verse poem that was performed in front of the arch during the ceremonial festivities of the royal entrance. Isis is the reigning deity of the explanatory text, while Minerva reigns in the performance piece.

Every social sector would be present at the festive public investiture of Don Tomás de la Cerda, Marquis de la Laguna, the new viceroy and his wife, taking place that November 30th. Mexico City, the court center from which New Spain was governed, owed the character of its *mestizaje* and its spirituality in part to Malintzín/Malinche and to the Virgen de Guadalupe. Built on the ruins of Tenochtitlan, the Aztec capital,

it had become home to fifteen thousand Spaniards and creoles, and a labor force of some eighty thousand Indian serfs and fifty thousand black and mulatto slaves and freed women and men (Leonard 1973: 72).

The court "represented a more aesthetic and vital mode of life" than the two other major institutions, the church and the university (Paz 1988: 25). The institutions, however, were in many ways indivisible; Sor Juana's literary artistry and her vital intelligence attracted patronage from all three quarters. She praised and (both explicitly and implicitly) criticized all three elite institutions. Exhibited at court as a beautiful prodigy, at the beck and call of her courtly employers; harassed as a nun for insisting on taking the path of the scholarly St. Augustine, rather than the road of "holy ignorance" mandated for female religious (Paz 1988: 499); as a woman blocked from attending the university with whose leading professors she was nevertheless often in conversation – Sor Juana occupied an ambiguous and contradictory social position.

She learned to make *contra/diction* itself an art. Her sharp wit, self-directed classical and humanistic education, and acquaintance with life in social ranks both above and below her own, were major sources for the distinguished literary works she created. Through her poems and her plays Sor Juana entertained, provoked, and instructed, and for over two decades enjoyed a preeminent place in the "city of letters" and among hundreds of people who entered the magnificent cathedrals of Mexico, Puebla, and Oaxaca on important religious holidays. From her ample and elegant quarters at the Convent of Saint Paula (Order of St. Jerome) she found ways of addressing every sector of society with her words.

Sor Juana's relative freedom to study and write in the cloister was mandated and protected by the vice-regal palace. The vice-regal couple also assured her connections to European intellectual circles as a published poet. Several high church officials were firm supporters as well. In her own city, however, she suffered attacks and envy. But, as we shall see, by the time the "persecution" (a word she used herself) took effect, and she was semi-quarantined – having perfected most of the forms and techniques of writing in the prevailing literary genres – she had already become one of the best-known writers and intellectuals of the second half of the seventeenth century.

Two collections of her work were published in Spain in her lifetime. The *Inundación castálida* (Castalian inundation) (1689) and *Segundo volumen* (Second volume) (1692) met with enormous success. The Vicereine María Luisa Manrique, Countess de Paredes, Marquise de la Laguna, to whom Sor Juana had paid tribute with her welcoming arch, titled *Neptuno Alegórico* (Allegorical Neptune), supported and arranged for both publications. From 1680 until 1686 the two women had seen each other almost every day.

Sor Juana's complete works include 65 sonnets (some 20 of them love sonnets, deemed by many to be among the most beautiful of the seventeenth century); 62 romances (similar to ballads); and a profusion of poems in other metrical forms. For dramatic performance she wrote three *autos sacramentales* (one-act religious dramas); two comedies (one a collaboration); 32 *loas* (preludes to plays, sometimes sung and performed separately for religious and vice-regal celebrations); two *sainetes* (farces) and

a *sarao* (celebratory song and dance) performed between the acts of one of the plays; and 15 or 16 sets of *villancicos* (groups of 8 or 9 carols for matins on religious themes such as the Nativity, Assumption, Immaculate Conception, and legends of Sts. Joseph, Peter, and Catherine of Alexandria) (Arenal 1997: 380). The 975-verse *Primero sueño* (First dream) is recognized as one of, if not *the*, most important philosophical poems in the Spanish language. Its autobiographical vision, not unlike that of Descartes, fuses poetry and science (Arenal 1997: 381).

In most of her lyrical poems Sor Juana constructs an ideal of femininity that includes intelligence as one of the inalienable attributes of a beautiful woman (Martínez-San Miguel 1999: 53–69). Always aiming to inject fluidity into gender casting and to counter misogyny, she associates masculinity also with beauty and chides "men, who simply because they are men think themselves wise" (Arenal and Powell 1994: 81). Her *Villancico VI* to "Santa Catarina," part of her last and most outspokenly feminist set of *villancicos*, voices praise of women's knowledge through a group of wise men: "There in Egypt, all the sages / by a woman were convinced / that gender is not the essence / in matter of intelligence" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 150–1). Her condemnation of the patriarchal double standard in "Poem 92" brings to its culmination the *querelle des femmes* (women's complaint), a long literary debate that inspired Christine de Pizan's *Book of the City of Women* (1401). Millions of schoolchildren in Spanish-speaking countries learn its first stanzas by heart:

> You foolish and unreasoning men
> who cast all blame on women,
> not seeing you yourselves are cause
> of the same faults you accuse:
> If, with eagerness unequaled,
> you plead against women's disdain,
> why require them to do well
> when you inspire them to fall?
> (Arenal and Powell 1994: 157)

In her own estimation (and in ours) Sor Juana's literary reputation is as legitimate as that of the Spanish and English poets and playwrights Góngora, Lope de Vega, Calderón, Shakespeare, and Donne. In the New Spain of Sor Juana's day, being a woman and a nun, a sought-after public figure, and writer who addressed worldly subjects, meant trouble. Often projected as an exotic specimen, a *rara avis* (strange bird), she learned to satirize the characterization. She bore her position on that particular pedestal in the interest of protecting her intellectual space. Despite and because of her fame and privilege, as well as her insistence on the primacy of reason and equality of the sexes, Sor Juana was increasingly embattled. Her life story and her writings bear witness to the intricate and at times torturous process of negotiation and struggle faced by women during the colonial period, not only in the social arena, but also in intellectual spheres.

In the case of Sor Juana, unlike those of Malinche and the Virgin of Guadalupe, we have access to numerous autobiographical glimpses of her life as a woman aspiring to become an intellectual during the second half of the seventeenth century. While highly stylized and in many instances encoded, her poems, plays, and prose texts refer consistently to the female condition, to the colonial context in which knowledge was produced, and to the emergence of a creole perspective that challenged the existing notion of a knowing subject (Martínez-San Miguel 1999).

As one of many fine examples we mention a *villancico* from a set of carols written in 1690, dedicated to St. Joseph. Singer-actors playing an African slave and an Indian assure a Spanish audience – composed of intellectuals and people from the court – that they count too, that they are part of the picture. The slave affirms that St. Joseph was like him, black, and the Indian that the finest sculpted effigies of the saint are those made by native artist-craftsmen like him. Sor Juana frames evangelization as a process of local appropriation and adaptation of Christian wisdom, a response to the specific spiritual and cultural needs of the diverse ethnic sectors of New Spain. In her portrayal of African and indigenous voices, multiple cultural, institutional, and linguistic references acknowledge the alternative epistemologies of the New World.

Her 1680 *Allegorical Neptune* (the text for the arch mentioned above) is an impressive woman-centered treatise on good government written in the fashionable baroque style of the epoch (Sabat de Rivers 1998: 241). It ushered in the decade of her most mature and fruitful literary labors, but also precipitated a break with her confessor of long standing, the Jesuit Antonio Núñez de Miranda. For 300 years critics believed that Núñez had angrily initiated the rupture with Sor Juana. Then, in 1980, the "Letter of Monterrey" (1681–2), named after the city in which it was found, proved crucial for comprehending the conflictual relationship between them: Sor Juana had been driven to dismiss him, in great part for having accepted and completed the commission to write the text for the arch. Outraged at her participation in the public sphere, and possibly envious, Núñez had been complaining in increasingly vociferous tones against Sor Juana's worldly activities. She had finally decided to use the permission granted to nuns to change confessors.

The unauthorized publication of her only serious theological prose composition in 1690, by the bishop of Puebla (Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz), along with a letter of rebuke signed with the pseudonym Sor Filotea de la Cruz, prompted a 33-page reply and triggered the "final crisis." Sor Juana's *Respuesta a Sor Filotea* (Answer . . .) is a "tour de force [that] defends the legacy of women's contribution to culture, and her own life in letters . . . a wily and witty . . . essay on silence and speech, religion and history, on language, knowledge, and interpretation" (Arenal 1997: 381). Her estranged confessor, and the archbishop Aguiar y Seijas, found in the bishop of Puebla's "public" admonition against Sor Juana's intellectual practices an opportunity to force her – by means of what has been called a private, closed trial – to become an obedient nun, devoted exclusively to her religious duties (Bijuesca and Brescia 1998; Glantz 2000). Although recent documentation suggests that she never stopped writing entirely, during the final four years of her life everything seemed to conspire against

her. Mexico itself was shaken by social and economic turmoil; she had lost her major institutional support; her religious superiors had convinced or pressured her into signing a letter of self-remonstration; she sold most of her library and collection of scientific and musical instruments and devoted herself fully to religious service. She died in 1695, while helping to care for her religious sisters during an epidemic. (See Paz 1988 for a critical analysis of her life and works, along with studies that address issues of gender, such as those of Franco 1989; Merrim 1991; Arenal and Powell 1994; Martínez-San Miguel 1999; Glantz 2000.)

Those final years mark a still vehemently debated period in Sor Juana's life. Analysis that examines the models of female behavior promoted and accepted by a colonial society broadens the discussion. The very churchmen who in the last quarter of the seventeenth century had censored Sor Juana were busy trying to find and promote exemplars of feminine submission, obedience, and humility. While parallels can be drawn between Sor Juana and some of the many nuns who composed religious texts in New Spain – and about whom men wrote sermons, panegyrics, and biographies – there seems to have been a concerted effort to make sure her path was not the one taken by other women.

Her adoring readers abroad, where she was not a direct threat, saw things otherwise; her friends in Spain amassed testimonials by prominent literati, aiming to defend her against her critics. Their poems form a long preface for her *Segundo volumen* (1692). This unfinished poem, believed to be her last, in which she mocks the grandiloquent assessments of her poetry with humor and irony, may well be a reply to the adulation of her in print. Sor Juana may, in part, be questioning the interpretation of her work produced in Europe, and pointing out that New Spain is not simply an extension of the metropolis – of what was called the *madre patria* (literally, mother fatherland):

> I am not she whom you think me to be,
> but rather you have created
> with your feathered pens, another being,
> another breath with your lips,
> and quite different from myself.
> I wander, multiform,
> among those quills, not as I am
> but as you fancy me.
> (Cruz 1951–7 I: 159; trans. Arenal and Powell)

According to Sor Juana, some of her meanings are literally "lost" in the reappropriation of her literary works by the audience overseas. Her verses suggest that cultural and literary ties merit thoughtful consideration.

Our reading – one of several the poem invites – emphasizes the manner in which Sor Juana addresses her readers in Spain, acknowledging the complex transatlantic networks within which her texts were published and read. In the following lines Sor

Juana illustrates an intrinsic contradiction of creole identity *vis-à-vis* native populations in the Americas:

> What magical infusions
> did Indian herbalists
> of my homeland pour
> to enchant my lines?
> (Ibid:160; trans. Arenal and Powell)

Sor Juana portrays herself as a representative of an alternative system of knowledge production. The differentiated literary and cultural practices she embraces, however, result from proximity to rather than a complete identification with the native populations in the Americas. The indigenous element appears here as a source of alterity that is not totally incorporated into the specific identity of an American creole discourse. As such, some of Sor Juana's writing can be seen as another example of the ambivalence that is critical in defining colonial subjectivity.

Another reading of the poem traces Sor Juana's interest in rhetoric and classical motifs, such as the figure of fickle Fame so popular in humanist Europe. Yet another explores her use of the rhetoric of humility and false modesty, viewing it as one of the ways in which she incorporates contradiction and subtly sharpens the critique of misogyny in her writing. In her contextually based reading, Margo Glantz (2000) situates this last poem in the poet's desire to tone down the forceful defense of her literary works. Deflecting some of the attention produced by the publication of her poetry and prose in Spain might relieve some of the strain under which she lived and wrote. The indigenous "magical infusions" become a metaphor for the alternative epistemologies that she represented in her *villancicos* and *loas*, and, as well, for the legitimation of the Americas as her place of origin.

Conclusion

By starting with a double reading of verses from the Nahuatl play mentioned at the beginning of this essay, and ending with an insistence on the multiplicity of meanings and readings to be found in Sor Juana's works, we point to the multifaceted reinterpretations of the colonial period that are promoted by a gendered perspective. Refocusing on three specific figures of sixteenth and seventeenth-century New Spain (colonial Mexico), we have observed some of the productive intersections of colonial studies and women's and gender studies. Our approach to La Malinche, the Virgin of Guadalupe, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, paradigms of the constitution of new colonial identities, tells us as much about men as about women, and helps us reenvision the conventional (male) gendered perspective still predominant in a significant part of the scholarship on colonial Latin America.

The three figures – still so visible and vital today – are, as is often the case with cultural icons, manipulated and taken out of context for a broad array of ideological and historical motives – nationalism, feminism, religion, and Latino identity formation among them. Our work acknowledges and respects these recuperations, yet stresses the importance of reconstituting specific historical contexts, most importantly those that disclose the multi-ethnic and multicultural nature of the imperial enterprise in the early modern period.

In conclusion, we want to encourage further reconsiderations of the historical archives that focus on the value of the practices of daily life. Another way of defining social politics, everyday actions are as powerful and pervasive as verbal or discursive representations in religious, legal, and artistic texts. Perhaps through that final refocusing of our academic notions of what is considered a legitimate historical source, we can make visible, audible, and understandable the multiple voices that constitute our contemporary American reality.

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12

British Colonial Expansion Westwards: Ireland and America

Andrew Hadfield

In 1599 a handsome and carefully transcribed manuscript was presented to Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex, providing extensive details of the current state of Ireland. "The Dialogue of Silvanus and Peregrine," written by H. C. – possibly Henry Chetttle (1560?–1607), dramatist, poet, pamphleteer, and, assuming the attribution is correct, spy – is principally important as a record of the course of the Nine Years War (1594–1603), providing especially important details of the situation in County Offaly (Morgan and Nicholls 2003; Jenkins 1934; Morgan 1993). The dialogue takes its place as one of a number of lengthy works written by English colonists who had settled on the Munster Plantation in southwest Ireland in the late 1580s and early 1590s, most significantly, Edmund Spenser's notorious *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (ca. 1596), on which H. C.'s text is quite clearly modeled, as the use of the names of Spenser's two sons indicates (McCarthy-Morrogh 1986; Spenser 1997). Having had his two protagonists provide a wealth of detail which will enable the authorities to plan a military conquest of the island, H. C. turns his attention in the last few leaves to his proposed other solutions for the restoration of civil order in Ireland. A key part of H. C.'s strategy is based on his observations of the Munster Plantation and the ways in which that settlement had anglicized the country:

> Now happely it may be said, why should not all other countries besyde, of that kingdome, be brought to the lyke stay that those westerne places are, to that I awnswere that as it shoulde seme, the Erles of Ormonde discedding of English bloud, and noble from the first, brought ouer in theire comepanies many gentlemen, and others of meaner sorte, as merchantes, hanycraftes men, and others: who not cominge ouer for a monthe; but for euer, first strengthened themselves by fortifyinge of many townes, which as I haue said before, are good stoare in that country, not oneley a defence for their personnes, if the Irish whom they cam to subdue . . . but a succor for theire personnes, if the Irish whom they cam to subdue, who might apply theire trades and craftes, without any impeachment of the eneemy, which was an especial occasion to abandon

> idlenes, the chiefest maistris, that attends vpon the meere Irish. (Morgan and Nicholls 2003: 128)

It is the commonplace banality of the passage that is important, rather than its insightful analysis of the ways and means of reforming Ireland. The notion that transporting a vast number of decent English farmers and laborers over the Irish Sea would transform the wasteful and idle nature of Irish society, making it productive and loyal, could be found in the works of Spenser, Robert Payne (1590), William Herbert (1591), and Richard Beacon (1594). Furthermore, contemporary English representations of the Americas are remarkably similar to those of Ireland. Sir George Peckham's "A true report of the late discoveries, and possession taken in the right of the Crowne of England of the Newfound Lands, By that valiant and worthy Gentleman, Sir Humphrey Gilbert Knight" (1583) was written to vindicate his master's patent to establish colonies in the Americas. Peckham explained at considerable length why the Native Americans had to trade with their European counterparts and why they needed to be transformed into civilized beings: the principal reason being that they were too idle and primitive to use the resources at their disposal properly and so needed to be colonized (Hadfield 2001: 256–65). Gilbert (1539?–83) had an extensive military career in Ireland in addition to his navigational expeditions to the New World, so it is likely that his account was known to his fellow officers, as Nicholas Canny suggests (Gosling 1911; Canny 1973, 1976). Gilbert's patent was passed on to his half-brother, Sir Walter Ralegh, when he perished at sea. Ralegh operated in a similar fashion to Gilbert, serving in Ireland, obtaining a huge estate on the Munster Plantation, and overseeing colonial ventures to North America, as well as making voyages of his own to South America (Quinn 1947). One of Ralegh's key clients was Thomas Harriot, colonist on Roanoke island, who also obtained lands on the Munster Plantation – although how much time he spent there is a matter of speculation (Shirley 1974). And Robert Payne, eager to persuade his Nottinghamshire neighbors to follow him to Ireland, argued that the peacefully inclined Irish were avid readers of Las Casas' horrifying tales of Spanish cruelty in the Americas and so were especially keen to accept English rule rather than throw their lot in with the Catholic Iberian empire (Payne 1590). This claim has an air of desperation, especially when seen in light of the events of the later 1590s, but the connection between Ireland and the Americas is nevertheless made.

The key question is how we read such statements and what they tell us about early modern European society. Is the "civilizing" discourse employed by English writers in Ireland a colonial one? Did they regard Ireland as a colony, like those in the Americas, or a kingdom ruled by the English Crown? Were they influenced by writings on the Americas, and, in turn, did the English experience in Ireland influence what happened in the Americas? The evidence is complicated and difficult to analyze (Hadfield 2003: ch. 1, 2004; Brady and Gillespie 1986; Morgan 1991). A whole series of contradictory statements are available. Edmund Spenser, when he dedicated the second edition of *The Faerie Queene* (1596) to Elizabeth, claimed that she was "Queen of

England, France and Ireland and of Virginia," suggesting that overseas colonies in America had the same status as Ireland (Spenser 2001: 27). Michael McCarthy-Morrogh, surveying the evidence remaining of the first Munster Plantation in the 1580s and 1590s, claimed that we ought to see English migration to Ireland in terms of a move within the British Isles and not as a form of emigration to a distant colony (McCarthy-Morrogh 1986: 280). John Dee, the influential theorist of empire, regarded Ireland as one of England's first overseas possessions (Armitage 1998: 115). Ciaran Brady has argued that English representations of Ireland were profoundly ambiguous: "On the one hand there was a perception of the island . . . as . . . a polity with a constitution similar to England's . . . Yet there was a second assumption . . . that Ireland was a colony with opportunities for gain and advancement for those who were willing to adventure for them" (Brady and Gillespie 1986: 17).

Which, if any, of these notions were present in H. C.'s mind as he wrote his dialogue? The answer is probably all of them, competing and overlapping, suggesting that English attitudes to Ireland were profoundly contradictory, as Ciaran Brady's formulation indicates. Ireland was supposedly ruled by the English monarch after Henry VIII had it declared that he was king rather than lord of Ireland in the post-Reformation Irish parliament, on June 18, 1541 (Ellis 1985: 5). This granted Irish subjects of the king the same rights as those who lived in England and Wales, and it is clearly this constitutional logic that lies behind Spenser's desires to equate Ireland, England, and Virginia as territories ruled by Elizabeth some fifty years later. The old division of Ireland into the "land of peace," where English law applied, and the "land of war," where Irish customs held sway, was supposedly abolished, paving the way for English dominance of the island. The policy of the most important of the king's lord deputies, Anthony St. Leger, was to persuade the Irish chieftains to adhere to a process of "surrender and re-grant," whereby they abjured their Irish titles and status and swore allegiance to Henry. In turn, they were granted English aristocratic titles – lords, earls, dukes, etc. – and expected to behave like their English counterparts as the Tudor state sought to impose its will through the streamlining of its bureaucratic machinery throughout the king's dominions.

However, such advances worked better as theory than practice. The Irish chieftains accepted English titles, then returned to their traditional practices, rebelling at regular intervals throughout the sixteenth century. The woodcuts, some of the finest made in late sixteenth-century England, included in John Derricke's *The Image of Irelande* (1581), depict the native Irish as the English more frequently saw them (Derricke 1985). The Irish represented here are keen to rebel at every turn; their society is geared to causing chaos and overthrowing civilized values. The first woodcut shows an Irish kern (a foot soldier) handing his lord a spear ready for use in battle (figure 12.1). The second shows an attack on a homestead by the lord and his kern (figure 12.2). The bottom left of the image shows the kern marching into battle behind a bagpiper; on the right, we see them burning the dwelling of a farmer, who faces the kern with his wife, each raising their hands in alarm and despair; and in the background we see the kern leading away the cattle they have stolen. The picture thus

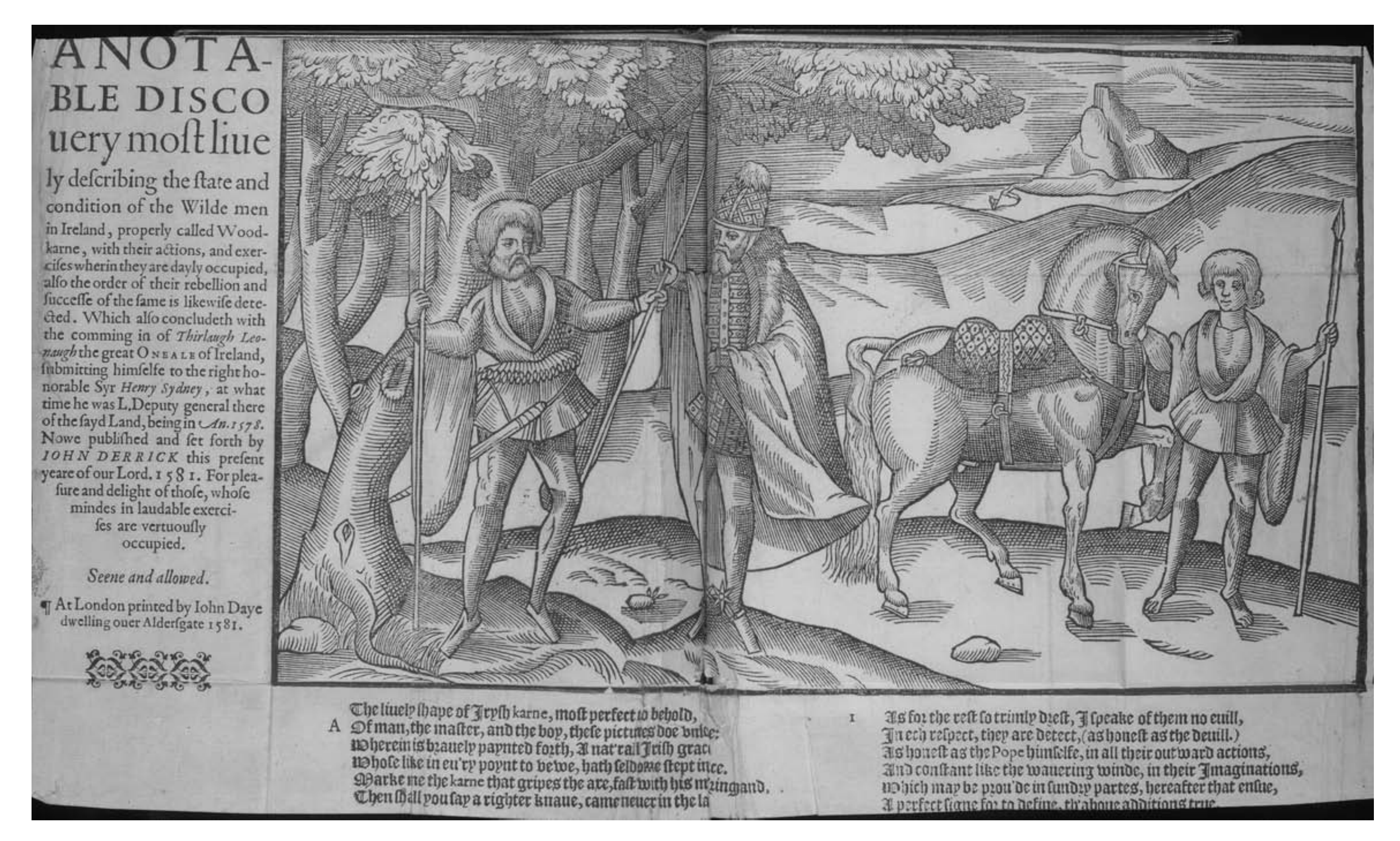


FIGURE 12.1 John Derricke, *The Image of Irelande* (1581), Plate 1, "An Irish Lord, his Attendant and his Kern."

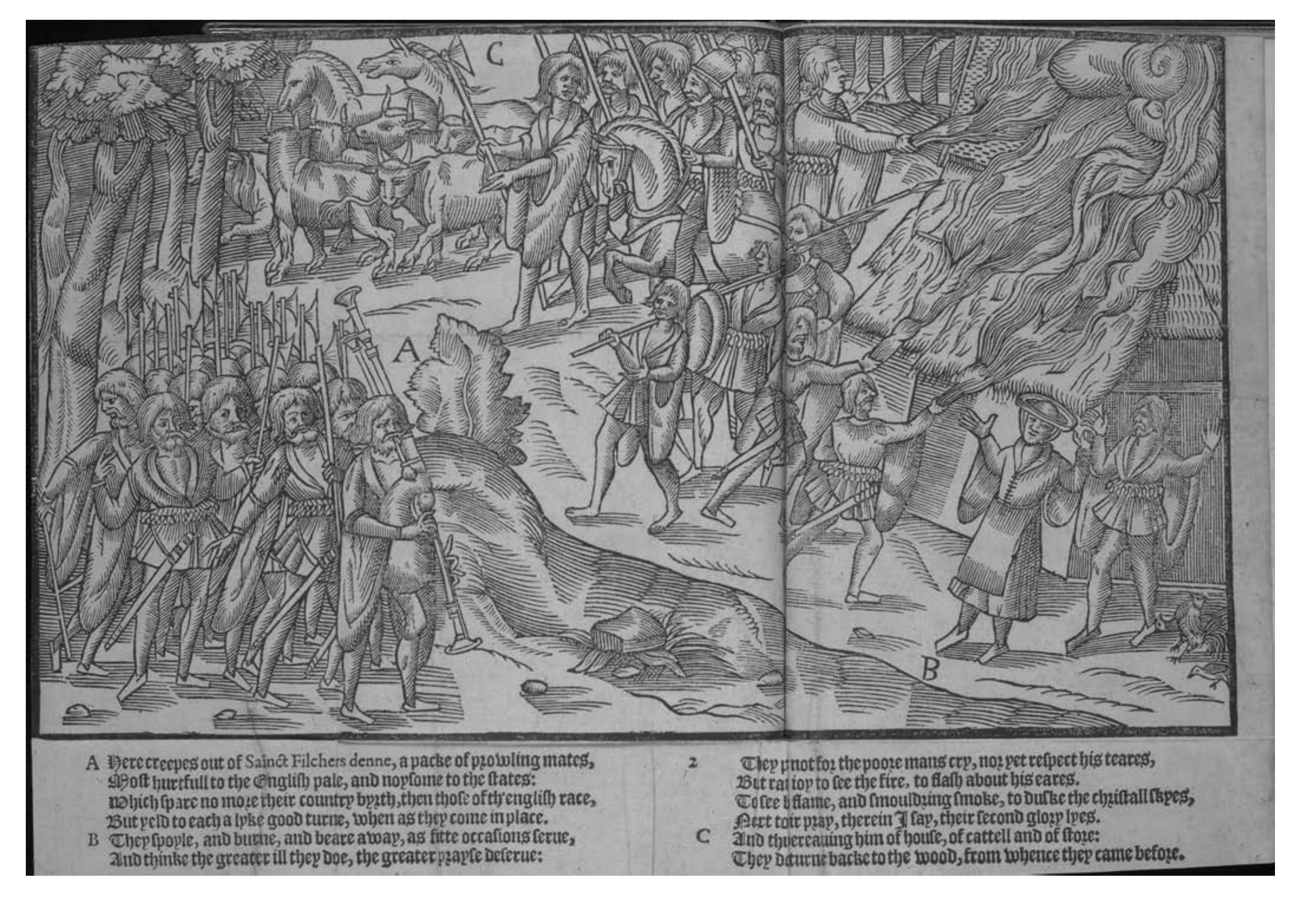


Figure 12.2 John Derricke, *The Image of Irelande*, Plate 2, "An Attack by Kern on a Homestead."

provides us with a dramatic sequence in the tradition of many Renaissance woodcuts. It is noticeable that the poor farmers, tenants of the aggressive lord's neighbor and rival, are represented wearing Irish dress, showing that Irish customs are disastrous for any farmers in Ireland, and explicitly hostile to the establishment of civilized values.

Derricke is showing that the ancient Irish tradition of cattle raiding, celebrated most famously in the great Ulster epic, the *Táin Bó Cualinge*, is a custom that has to be stamped out if Ireland is to advance in any way (Kinsella 1970). In the third, the most frequently reproduced of the images, we see the Irish celebrating their victory with an open-air feast (figure 12.3). In the center sit the lord and his chief followers. In the left background his servants prepare the carcass of a cow, while in the foreground two more cook it over an open fire. On the right we see the entertainment, celebrating the great victory. A harper plays while a bard recites verses, the type of poetry that writers such as Spenser so aggressively condemns as incompatible with civilized order (Spenser, 1997: 75–7). Behind them two figures appear to "moon" at those round the table, but these are probably "farters," paid entertainers who possessed an unusual skill and were very popular at Irish houses in the late sixteenth century (Fletcher 2000: 114). In the foreground a dog gnaws a bone. The picture is notable for its extremely messy and discordant composition, a striking contrast to the scenes of military action in the rest of the series, and a sign of the warped values of Irish society which the English were struggling to correct.

The fourth woodcut shows the English attacking the Irish, the neatly arranged military lines showing how order was being restored to Ireland (figure 12.4). On the left side the chief is blessed by a friar, whose face may well be designed to resemble a popular image of a devil. English commentators on Ireland routinely blamed Irish resistance to English rule on their stubborn and perverted form of savage Catholicism (Rich 1610). The right side shows the English getting the better of the Irish and in the foreground we see the dead body of the chief carried by his followers, and lamented by the friar, who strikes a pose very like the farmer and his wife in the second woodcut.

In the fifth woodcut we are shown the triumphant return of the English soldiers, one of whom carries the severed head of the chief, flanked by two soldiers with heads on their upright swords (figure 12.5). In the left background two captives are led, one by the hair and the other by a halter. In the right background the cattle are herded by the English soldiers, presumably on their way back to their owners.

The remaining plates place the victory of the English in a wider, national context. Plate six shows the Lord Deputy, Sir Henry Sidney, riding out of Dublin Castle, its battlements studded with the heads of rebels. Plate seven shows Sidney marching out after receiving a message from a kern, and plate eight represents his army on the march. Plate nine is a spectacularly executed battle scene, which again shows an English victory and the Irish in hasty retreat. Plate ten shows Sidney's triumphal return to Dublin.

The pictures of the Irish in *The Image of Ireland* represent a people markedly different from those that accompanied Thomas Harriot's *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (1590) (Harriot 1972; Castillo and Schweitzer 2001:

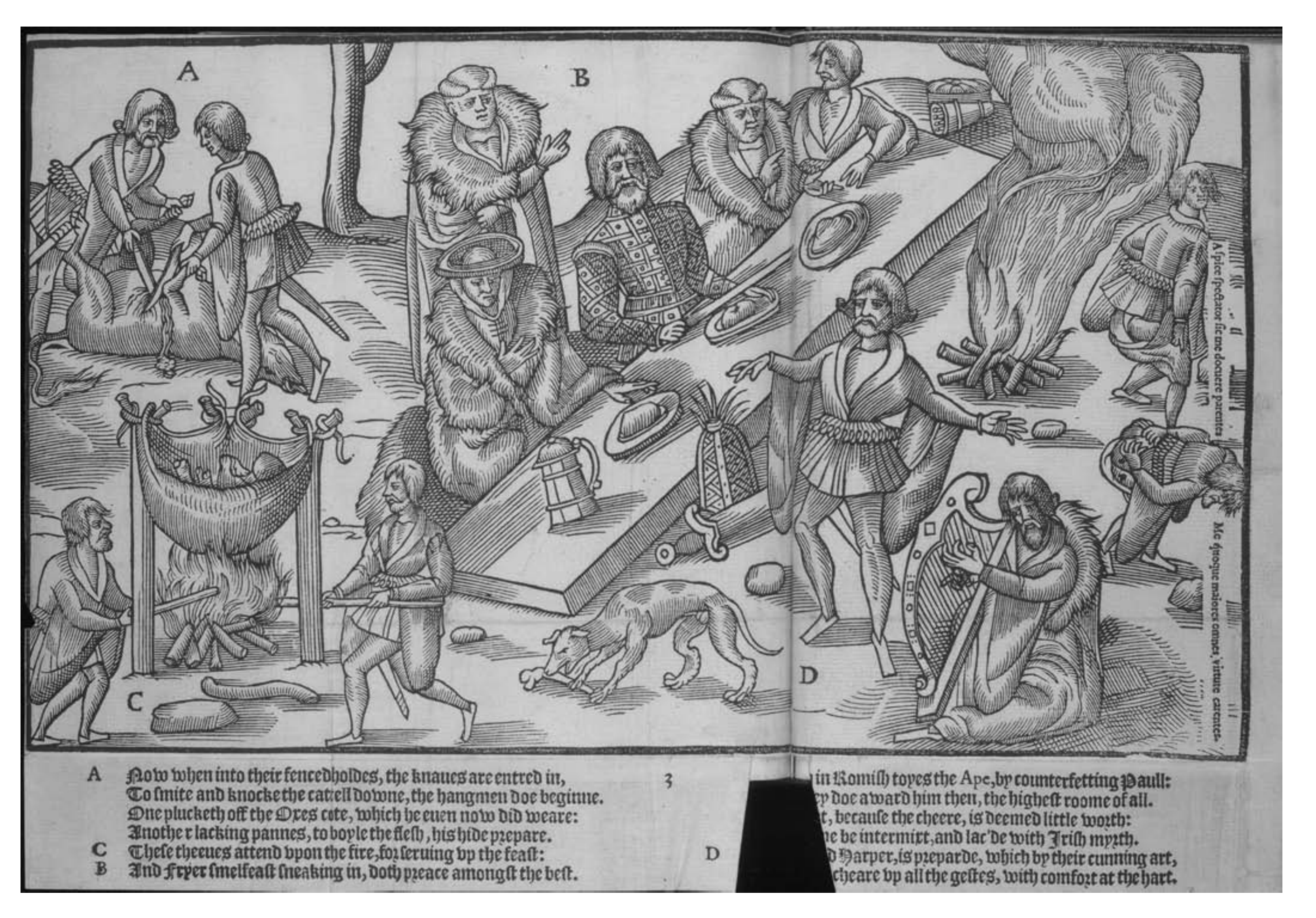


FIGURE 12.3 John Derricke, *The Image of Irelande*, Plate 3, "An Irish Lord Feasting in the Open Air."



FIGURE 12.4 John Derricke, *The Image of Irelande*, Plate 4, "Attack by English Soldiers on Irish Kern and their Lord."

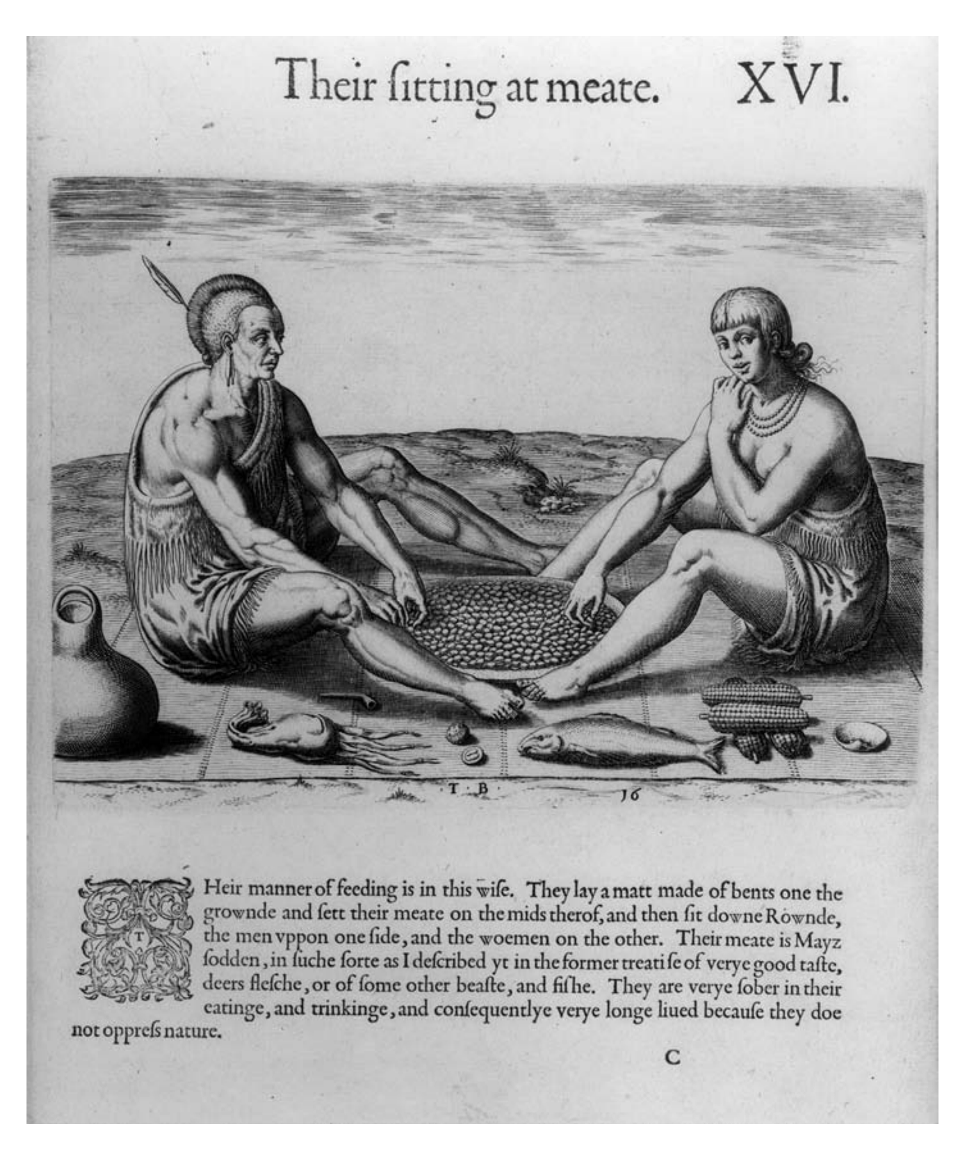


FIGURE 12.5 John Derricke, *The Image of Irelande*, Plate 5, "The Successful Return of the English Force after the Defeat of the Irish kern."

92–9). Harriot's involvement in Ireland suggests that he must have been aware of a text such as Derricke's, and it would not be stretching a point to argue that his representations of the Native Americans are deliberately fashioned as a means of distancing them from the primitive/savage peoples of the Old World. The tract was produced for two main reasons: first, as a scientific work to record the flora, fauna, and people discovered in the New World: and, second, to persuade investors and potential colonists to support the venture. This handsome and expensive edition of Harriot's work, which had first been published as a small, insignificant quarto in 1588, was dedicated to Sir Walter Ralegh, Harriot's patron and, after Gilbert's death, the chief proponent of colonial adventure in England, as well as the most substantial landholder on the Munster Plantation. The Irish context of Harriot's treatise is palpable, albeit disguised.

The woodcuts which accompany the text are just as important as those in *The Image of Ireland*. Without them the book is a very different proposition. They are all based on drawings made by John White – apart from one by the French artist Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues, who had spent time on the ill-fated French Protestant colony in Florida, destroyed by the Spanish. White had been the official artist of the Roanoke colony, eventually its governor, who had returned to England to get help and so escaped the unknown fate of those left behind (Kupperman 1984). White meticulously recorded the plants and animals encountered in Virginia, as well as the customs and habits of the natives, and it is these pictures which are contained in Harriot's work.

The natives are represented as a civil people, inhabiting villages, growing food, caring for their young, performing ceremonies, and so on. The sixteenth woodcut shows a man and a woman eating a large plate of beans or nuts, surrounded by corncobs and various types of fish (figure 12.6). The accompanying note is clearly designed to shame their European counterparts, and show that the native Americans are not afflicted with greed, despite the abundant food that they produce: "They are very sober in their eatinge, and trinkinge, and consequentlye verye longe lived because they doe not oppress nature" (Harriot 1972: 61). There is a rather pointed irony here, as the Indians did not live that long after their encounter with the English, as Harriot's text famously records (Greenblatt 1988). But the purpose of the image is not difficult to determine: the problems of Europe – unemployment, scarcity, excess, ill-health – can be left behind in the New World and men and women can live in harmony with nature. The filth and disorder of Derricke's Irish feast are a world away. The Indian villages are shown to be orderly; again, a pointed contrast to the chaos Derricke shows as the norm in Ireland (figure 12.7). Indians are depicted building boats, fishing and cooking, sustaining themselves from the resources available to them, not raiding their neighbor's cattle like the Irish (figure 12.8). Only their pagan religious practices mark the Native Americans out as an uncivilized people and Harriot works hard in the text to reassure his readers that the Indians are easy enough to convert to Christianity. Given the choice between the two societies, it is easy to see which one might be the more attractive for potential colonists.



Their ſitting at meate. XVI.

T · B · 16

THeir manner of feeding is in this wiſe. They lay a matt made of bents one the grownde and ſett their meate on the mids therof, and then ſit downe Rownde, the men vppon one ſide, and the woemen on the other. Their meate is Mayz ſodden, in ſuche ſorte as I deſcribed yt in the former treatiſe of verye good taſte, deers fleſche, or of ſome other beaſte, and fiſhe. They are verye ſober in their eatinge, and trinkinge, and conſequentlye verye longe liued becauſe they doe not oppreſs nature.

C

FIGURE 12.6 Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* (Theodor De Bry, 1590), Plate 16, "Their sitting at meate."

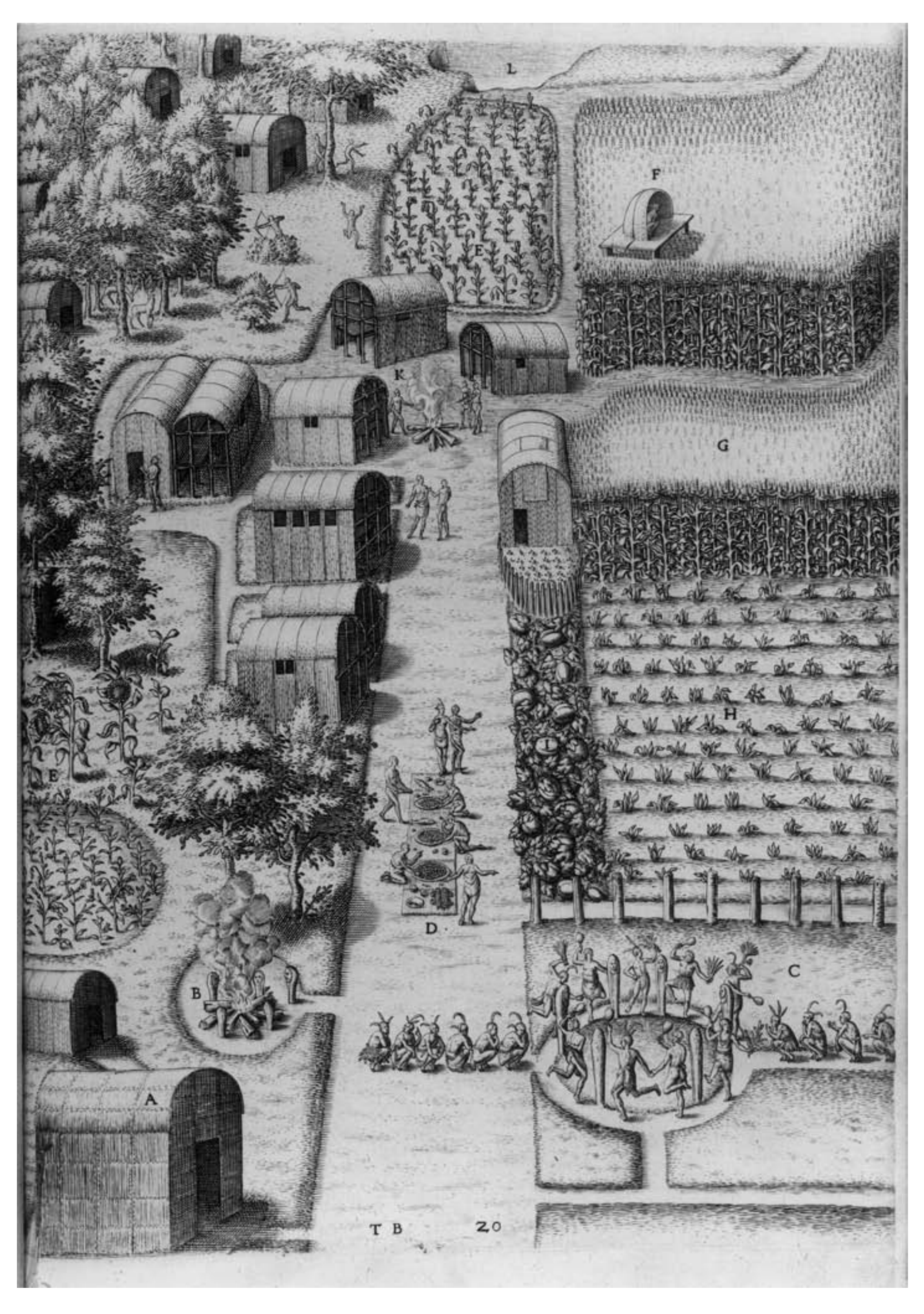


FIGURE 12.7 Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, Plate 20, "The Towne of Secota." By permission of the British Library.

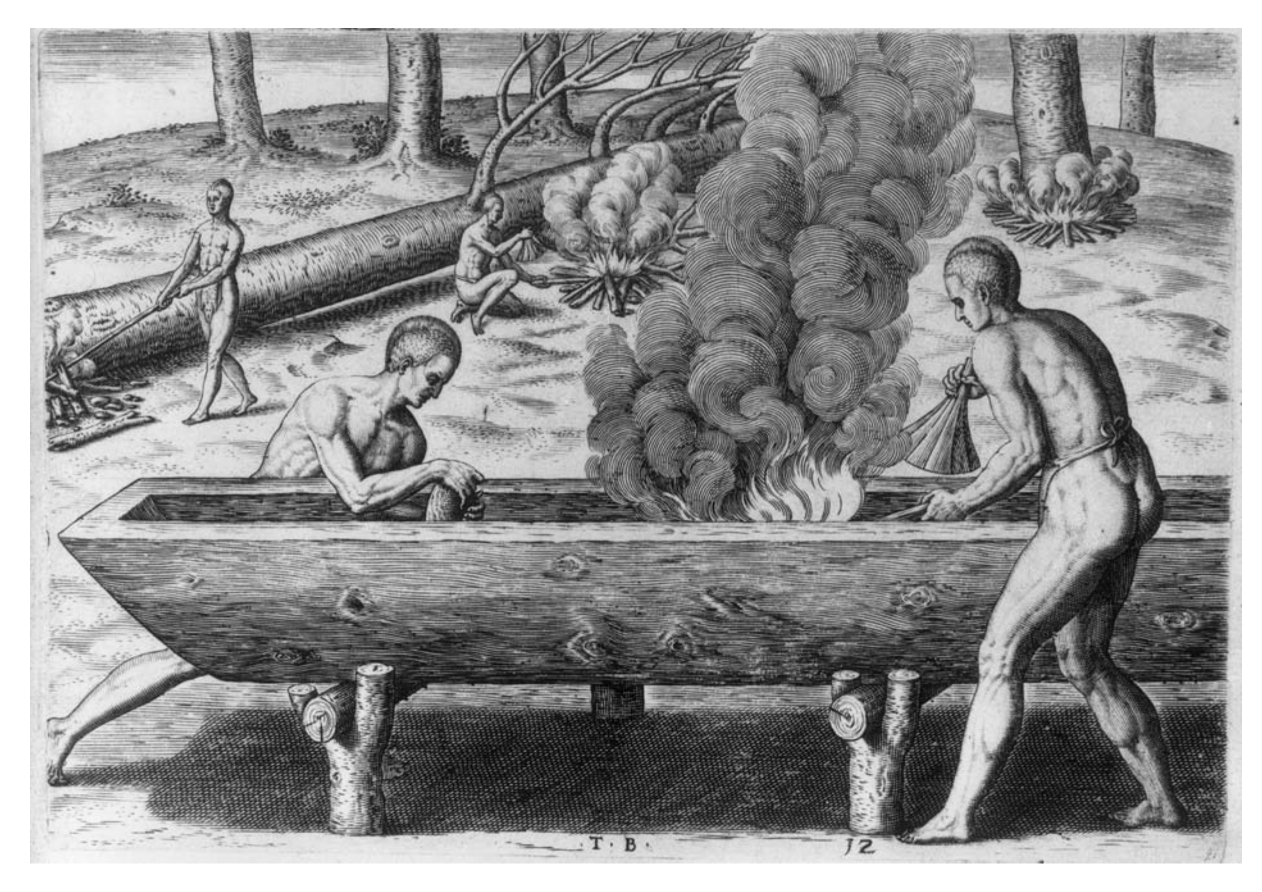


FIGURE 12.8 Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, Plate 12, "The manner of makinge their boates." By permission of the British Library.

The contrast is further emphasised in a series of five woodcuts produced after the twenty-three that represent Virginian society. These are "Som Pictures of the Pictes which in the olde tyme dyd habite one part of the great Beretainne" (Harriot 1972: 75). Three show the Picts (man, woman, and daughter) and two their neighbors (man and woman), obviously the Britons, although the identity is left unstated (figures 12.9–12.10). The Picts are shown to be fierce peoples, tattooed all over, brandishing weapons and carrying severed heads, as striking a contrast to the Native Americans as Derricke's Irish are.

Why are these pictures reproduced here? The point is, I think, to make the Native Americans seem even more attractive. The savages of ancient and modern Britain – principally, the Irish and the Scots – are shown not to be like the relatively civilized peoples of the New World, a contrast that perhaps shocked and startled some readers, precisely the effect the text may have been designed to have had. The Picts, a people who inhabited ancient Scotland, as any reader of Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1577) would have known, were bloodthirsty warriors, just like the Irish represented in *The Image of Ireland*. Peaceful societies could be discovered across the Atlantic, rather than at home, and these would reward those sensible enough to take advantage of the opportunity to make their home there. Furthermore, given their already relatively advanced state, who could tell how far they could change in the future when Christianized.

In contrast, Derricke's woodcuts reveal that the reality of English rule in Ireland was more about military conquest than the spread of legal processes, agricultural practices, and civilized values. The English had to confront a whole series of major rebellions throughout the sixteenth century, starting with the revolt of Silken Thomas, son of the earl of Kildare, in 1534, which ended the power of the chief Irish magnates, the Geraldines; followed by localized military conflict in Ulster led by Shane O'Neill in the 1560s; more serious opposition in the early 1580s in Munster (the Desmond Rebellion); and culminating in the Nine Years War (1594–1603), which began with the rebellion of Hugh O'Neill, earl of Tyrone, but developed into a major threat to English control of the island, as Tyrone enlisted Spanish and papal military aid. With more substantial aid, Tyrone might well have won and been able to establish his dream of an independent Catholic Ireland. However, the defeat of his forces at the Battle of Kinsale (December 24, 1601) paved the way for complete English control and the establishment of the most successful English colony in Ireland, the Ulster Plantation, which has established the divided form that Ireland assumes today (Morgan 1993; Moody 1939).

The course of Irish history over the sixteenth century demonstrates that we must be very careful to distinguish between a description of Ireland as a colony ruled by England, and the establishment of colonies as a means of governing Ireland (Finley 1976). The latter use does not invalidate the former, of course, but we should always remember that it is a historical description applied to Irish history after the sixteenth century. The same distinction was evidently applied to the Americas, as Spenser's constitutional formulation indicates: Virginia could be described as a kingdom, but it is clear that the settlement on Roanoke island was a colony. Colonies, following the



FIGURE 12.9 Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, "Som Pictures of the Pictes which in the Olde tyme dyd habite one part of the great Bretainne," Plate 1, "The truue picture of one Picte." By permission of the British Library.

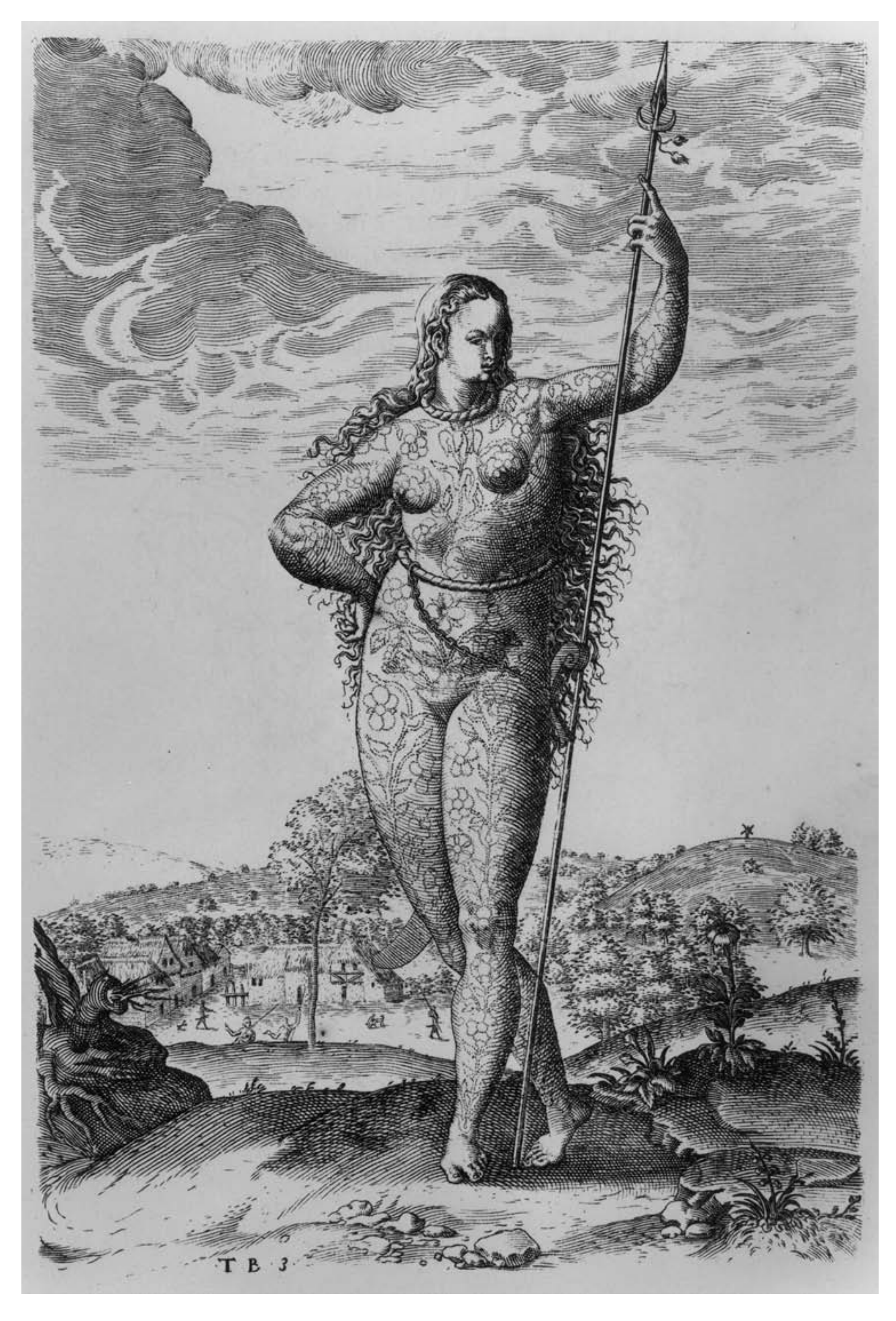


FIGURE 12.10 Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, "Som Pictures of the Pictes," Plate 3, "The truue picture of a yonge dowgter of the Pictes." By permission of the British Library.

examples of ancient Greece and Rome, were defined as a group of people from one country who had established an outpost in another, remaining distinct from the natives and loyal to those who had sent them over. To give one example: Thomas More's Utopians establish colonies in the countries of their more primitive neighbors as a means of establishing control over them and helping to bring them to the superior Utopian way of life, but they can always be recalled if needed by the mother country (More 1989: 56).

The English did indeed establish colonies in Ireland and many substantial treatises devoted to reforming Ireland include lengthy discussions of the forms that colonies should take. Colonies were established during Mary's reign in Leix and Offaly in 1557, which were renamed Queen's and King's Counties; Sir Thomas Smith (1513–77), Elizabeth's principal secretary, was behind an expedition to establish colonies in the Ards Peninsula in the early 1570s, which resulted in the death of his son, whose body was then boiled and fed to their dogs by the natives; more extensive plans saw the colonization of Munster on the lands confiscated from the earl of Desmond after his failed rebellion; and, finally, Ulster was extensively colonized, mainly by Scots, during James' reign (Ellis 1985). The experience of colonialism in Ireland resulted in two different models of colonies. The first, like More's Utopian model, was an open form of colony that was designed to allow settlers and natives to intermingle, in the belief that the former could help to transform the society of the latter. The second was a closed form of military establishment, more like a garrison than a colony, and probably owed much to Machiavelli's discussion on colonies in *The Prince* and, more extensively, *The Discourses on Livy* (Machiavelli 1988: 9–10; 1970). Thomas Smith's early optimism meant that his early plans envisaged colonies in which settlers and natives could interact with few restrictions. After a series of disasters had led him to appreciate the dangerous nature of the undertaking, his later plans were for much more closed and exclusive colonial settlements (Morgan 1985). The Munster Plantation, established in the late 1580s, quite deliberately mixed English and Irish, believing that the spread of English law would enable "New" English settlers, who had come over to Ireland in the last few years, the "Old" English, who were descended from the Anglo-Norman invaders in the twelfth century, and native Irish, to live in relative harmony. Often, the claims of Anglo-Irish lords, such as Lord Maurice Roche, that they owned sections of land, were upheld by local courts, against settlers, such as Edmund Spenser (Maley 1994: 50–4). The destruction of the plantation played a part in the strict rules established in the plans for the Ulster Plantation, where it was decreed that the two peoples should be kept apart, and the settlements constructed for maximum defense against predicted attacks. This proved unworkable as not enough laborers made the journey from England and Scotland, so Irish labor invariably had to be used (Hadfield 2005).

William Herbert (1553?–93) recommends the establishment of colonies in his manuscript treatise, *Croftus Sive De Hibernia Liber* (ca. 1591). Herbert's main focus is on the need to spread "proper" religion among the Irish as a means of civilizing them and stemming their resistance to English rule. He is notable as a champion of the

need to translate the Bible and Prayer Book into Irish for everyday use, and has gained a reputation as a relatively mild colonist. Nevertheless, he often despairs of converting the Irish and recommends the use of force at key points in his arguments. Herbert uses his knowledge of Tacitus and Machiavelli to outline a theory of colonialism, envisaging colonies as military outposts established to check the resistance of the natives and to help convert them to a civilized way of life. Like many other English commentators, Herbert sees the Irish lords as tyrants, exploiting their followers, who will eagerly turn to English ways of life when they realize how miserable their current existence is. Herbert imagines a future Ireland of citizens who obey because they want their society to flourish rather than because they are coerced. When English rule is complete Ireland will enjoy

> the inviolable authority of good laws, the wisdom, care and eagerness which magistrates show in performing their duties, the submission of the people to the magistrates, the harmony and concord which the citizens have among themselves, the paternal love and care of the magistrates for the people, the secure possession and maintenance of his rights and property for each man, the irreproachable private conduct and upright morals of every citizen, public relief for poor and needy citizens, impartiality among citizens with each man being assigned marks of honour, station and rank in accordance with his condition, a just mean being kept between the different parties in the state so that one may not oppress the other or become too powerful. In a word, the settled condition, the form of government and peace should be so sweet that all men would be content with the present state of affairs. (Herbert 1992: 67)

This vision is carefully crafted and owes much to Herbert's reading of the republican history of Rome. It suggests that, for most people, life in a properly colonized Ireland should be much better than that in England. There are various reasons for Herbert making such claims: he wants Englishmen and women to go and settle in Ireland; he wants the Irish to be persuaded that life will be better if they submit to the English authorities; but also, the possibility of establishing a new society out of nothing appeals to the visionary in Herbert. It is no coincidence that the theory and practice of colonialism has often been a trigger for utopian political idealists, and it links the history of colonialism in Ireland to that in the Americas.

Herbert's treatise contains a long passage recommending colonies as the best means of controlling a recalcitrant conquered country:

> Thucydides says: sending colonies amongst a foreign nation lately conquered is the safest way of maintaining control over it. And Livy remarks: colonies should be conducted to conquered peoples so that they may be more securely restrained and watched. Tacitus is also of this opinion: colonies should be conducted to old and stubborn enemies to hold them more easily to their allegiance. So also Sallust in his *Of Sovereignty*: the co-option of new citizens or the conducting of colonies is a great help in establishing sovereignty. (Herbert 1992: 75)

Herbert's range of authorities reminds us that so much argument in early modern England revolved around who could cite what and bring the wisdom of the ancients to support a particular position. We should be wary of assuming that there was a direct link between the experience of colonizing Ireland and the Americas, that the success of the Spanish empire inspired Englishmen to establish similar settlements on their neighboring island, and then in turn, the successes and failures of experiments in Ireland determined the progress of the first colonies established in Virginia, and then later in Massachusetts (Canny 1973). There were links between the two spheres of colonial activity, as the careers of Greville, Ralegh, Harriot, White, and others attest, and it is also the case that many restless young men, such as Philip Sidney, son of the Lord Deputy, Sir Henry Sidney, was eager to be involved in each area (Duncan-Jones 1991). But Herbert's comments should serve to remind us that the collection of writings from ancient Greece and Rome were often what really counted.

Herbert argues, citing Machiavelli, that colonies should appeal to a prince because they are so cheap to establish and will then maintain themselves if well run. This makes them much better instruments of policy than the use of military forces, which are hugely expensive (Herbert 1992: 75–7). Herbert is once again prescient, although this is perhaps not a remarkable insight. The failure to govern Ireland effectively did eventually require military intervention, and Elizabeth's parsimonious instincts had to be overcome when she agreed to finance the massive army led by the earl of Essex (ironically enough, the son of a colonial enthusiast, who had tried to establish settlements in Ulster in the early 1570s), and, when he failed to defeat the earl of Tyrone, that of Lord Mountjoy (Ellis 1985: ch. 9).

Colonies must be carefully planned if they are to be successful. Herbert warns of the danger of colonies dissolving and degenerating. They are likely to dissolve if "individuals are settled inconveniently and at random without plan or order"; if they "are governed unjustly or carelessly"; if they are "not protected and supported by ordinances and aids which are fitting and suitable"; or, "because they are unfairly oppressed and crushed by burdens and vexations" (Herbert 1992: 77–9). Herbert is insistent that colonies need to be heavily fortified and so able to protect themselves, but he is alive to his republican colonial ideal in maintaining that colonists and natives need to be treated equally and receive equal benefits from colonies. In fact, Herbert's fear is that the colonists will be the ones who will be exploited, not the natives, expressing the widespread belief of the Munster planters that they were the real victims because the law often favored the native Irish, the English authorities being too gullible and stubborn to realize the true situation in Ireland:

> Colonists are oppressed with unfair burdens, if they pay higher rents than the natives, especially when their expenses for provisions and clothing and for other official duties of civil life are so much the greater; if they are called out on arduous and troublesome journeys and engagements more often or more frequently than is right; finally, if they are ruined and beggared by taxes, imposts and legal prohibitions, which things are also the signs and tokens of unjust administration. (Herbert 1992: 79–81)

This passage has all the marks of personal experience – Herbert does not cite any classical authorities to support his case – and it provides a neat link to the discussion of colonies degenerating, which also seems to be based on his experience of living in southwest Ireland. Herbert may have been a relatively benign colonist with his belief in the need to translate the Bible and Prayer Book into Irish, but he is as fierce in his condemnation of Irish society and customs as most other commentators. His method of preventing colonies from degenerating is simple: "destroy and stamp out" native habits and customs. Herbert rails against the "uncivilized manners, rites, dress and . . . hostile and barbarous customs" of the Irish. If this is successfully achieved, "the natives will put on and embrace the habits and customs of the colonists . . . once you have removed those things which can alienate hearts and minds, they will both become united" (Herbert 1992: 81). Herbert was echoing the logic expressed by many English commentators on Ireland. The lawyer Sir William Gerard, writing a report in 1571, argued that "if Irishe speache, habit and conditions made the man Irish, the moste parte of the Englishe were Irishe" (Hadfield and McVeagh 1994: 41). If so, then we might ask what exactly would be left if the Irish stopped observing their manners and customs? The answer is nothing. Herbert's plans for Ireland's future involves the creation of a new society which replaces Irish Ireland. Herbert may not have explicitly stated this in his treatise, but other writers were acutely aware of what they were doing. In the anonymous, "A Discourse of Ireland" (c.1599), written at the height of the Nine Years War, the author recommends the complete destruction of the Irish who are to be replaced by a mixture of English and Dutch settlers as they will run the country better. The plan necessitates the "cleare riddance . . . of the Irish bloud and stirpe . . . as neare as shall be possible" and the desirable result will be that Ireland will at last be made profitable to England "or mearely a West England" (Hadfield and McVeagh 1994: 52).

Croftus is an important treatise for a variety of reasons. Perhaps it is most significant because it shows that even well meaning and benign colonists shared a ferociously racist colonial logic with their more aggressive countrymen (Spivak 1999). It proved impossible for most to escape from this intellectual framework. Such patterns were to be repeated in the Americas, as apparently diametrically opposed arguments ended up having the same effect, a case in point being the dispute about native languages between Roger Williams and John Elliott (Scanlan 1999: chs. 5–6). Furthermore, Herbert's arguments also show that it is often the most visionary and egalitarian of thinkers who cause the most disruption, having the lowest opinion of the natives and the grandest plans for their transformation. In Ireland this proved to be the case in the later seventeenth century, as the Cromwellian forces sought to reform Ireland by banishing all the forces that had opposed the parliamentary armies west over the River Shannon (Maley 1993). In America there were fewer plans for systematic violence, for a variety of reasons. The colonists did not have the power to impose their will on the natives and their success in establishing control was often due to luck rather than wise judgment or brutally effective policy. As Harriot's *Brief and True Report* demonstrates, disease rather than slaughter was the principal cause of death for the Native Ameri-

cans who encountered the English. In Ireland it was the English who suffered from diseases, especially the "bloody flux," which killed far more soldiers than the Irish. Equally important to note when comparing the two colonial spheres is the fact that colonies were a means to an end in Ireland, that of securing control over a country assumed to belong by right of conquest to the English monarch. In America the situation was less clear, and colonies served a variety of roles. While colonial propaganda claimed that colonies were established for social, political, and religious reasons, to relieve unemployment and overpopulation problems at home, and to help convert the Native Americans to true Christianity, the reality was often different. Colonies were frequently established in the late 1500s and early 1600s as privateering bases to enable the English to attack Spanish ships and seize the treasure they were bringing back from their colonies in South America (Andrews 1984). In the seventeenth century they were invariably conceived and set up by religious dissidents – "Puritans" – eager to escape from the control of the government and church in England (Adair 1998).

Another extensive discussion of colonialism is contained in Richard Beacon's *Solon his Follie*, which, as its subtitle, *A Politique Discourse touching the reformation of commonweales, declined or corrupted*, indicates, was both a specific analysis of Irish society, and a more general reflection on political institutions and change. Beacon, following in a long line of mainstream political theorists, argues that the laws must be made to fit the people in question, indicating that general rules will always have highly specific applications. The main purpose of the book is to reverse the decline of Ireland (Salamina) and so make it governable once more. The third book describes at length how this may best be achieved and it is not a great surprise to learn that establishing colonies is considered the most successful method of imposing one's will on a recalcitrant people. Establishing colonies is said to be "the most beneficiall for the containing of a nation conquered in their duty an obedience" (Beacon 1996: 136). For Beacon, as for Herbert, colonies and garrisons are virtually interchangeable concepts, a usage he has learned from Machiavelli, his intellectual mentor (Anglo 1990). According to Beacon, colonies serve three main purposes, helping both the conquerors and the conquered. First, they allow a country to get rid of its unwanted citizens: "the people poore and seditious which were a burden to the common-weale, are drawen forth, whereby the matter of sedition is removed out of the Cittie" (Beacon 1996: 139). The assumption made is that profitable work can be found abroad, as there are more resources to exploit, a key plank of Thomas Harriot's argument in *A Brief and True Report of . . . Virginia*. Secondly, they serve as a means of converting the natives and civilizing them: "by transplanting of colonies, the people conquered are drawen and intised by little and little, to embrace the manners, lawes, and government of the conquerour" (Beacon 1996: 139–40). Beacon assumes that cultural traffic will be in one direction only: an assertion patently at odds with the normal experience of life in Ireland, in which the English colonizers were more often than not assimilated into Irish society and became Irish, a process disparagingly referred to as "degeneration" by English commentators. The same process frequently happened in the Americas and

was always a danger that central authorities trying to police a far-flung outpost had to confront (Sheehan 1980). Thirdly, Beacon argues that colonies stand as the best means of warning the central authorities of imminent danger: "colonies being placed and dispersed abroade amongest the people, like Beacons doe foretell and disclose all conspiracies, and as a garrison also are wont to suppresse the mutinies of such as are desirous of alteration and change" (Beacon 1996: 140). The pun Beacon makes on his name gives this last section of the text an intimacy between the disputants in the dialogue and the reader, who is drawn into the circle of intellectual discussion through the recognition of this familiar piece of word play. The maneuver constructs the reader as a member of a civilized community that is keen to transform the savage and so spread proper values.

Beacon gives meticulous advice for the establishment of colonies and, in a book full of lists, establishes a whole series of procedures to follow and dangers to avoid, as a convenient way of advising would-be statesmen. "In the order and manner of deducting collonies, certaine rules are to bee observed" (Beacon 1996: 140). He states, the lands have to be divided up carefully, so that "strengths by great numbers may be deducted," a principle that perhaps suggests that colonial society will be different from English society, and that colonists will be more equal than their counterparts at home. This was indeed to be the experience of colonial America, with radical ideas developing among the New England colonists in particular, partly through their nonconformist beliefs and partly through the situation in which they found themselves (Pocock 1975). Beacon could not have been expected to predict this change, but his comments indicate that he was well aware that colonies would undoubtedly transform the lives and ideas of those who lived in them, an experience that characterized the "New" English in Ireland. They assumed an English colonial identity that was distinctly at odds with that of the English back home (Brady and Gillespie 1986).

Colonies will be the main method of transforming Ireland and making it more like England. Certain safeguards need to be observed, however. Beacon warns his readers of the danger of the intermarriage of colonists and natives, a phenomenon that can undermine the purpose of colonial expansion and help to strengthen rather than diminish resistance, so that "the state was compelled of force to sende thither an army royall for the better suppressing of those disorders and rebellions" (Beacon 1996: 142). The close link between the military and civilizing purposes of garrisons/colonies is constantly stressed. Experience has shown that colonies need to be "collected . . . into one place of strength, whereby they have repelled from time to time, all internal forces or sodaine incursions," and not dispersed too thinly throughout the land (Beacon 1996: 143). Beacon was, of course, quite right to be concerned about this problem and he clearly has in mind the scattered existence of the Munster settlers. They were easily defeated by the concerted forces of the Irish in 1598 and forced to retreat to the stronghold of Cork city, abandoning their estates (McCarthy-Morrogh 1986: ch. 4).

More overtly propagandist and less analytical is Robert Payne's *A Brief Description of Ireland* (1589), which urges his fellow English neighbors to come and settle on the

Munster Plantation. Payne argues that Ireland will provide a huge quantity of desirable produce because its soil is so fertile and its climate ideally suited for agriculture:

> The commodities of the countrie are many moe then eyther the people can use or I recite. Their soile for the most parte is very fertil, and apte for Wheate, Rye, Barly, Peason, Beanes, Oates, Woade, Mather, Rape, Hoppes, Hempe, Flaxe and all other graines and fruites that England any wise doth yeelde. There is much good timber in many places . . . There is verye riche and greate plentie of Iron stone . . . Also there is great store of Lead Ore, & Wood sufficiente to mayntayne divers Iron and lead workes . . . There be great store of wild Swannes, Cranes, Pheasantes, Patriges, Heathcocks, Plovers . . . & all other fowles much more plentifull then in Englande . . . You may keep a better house in Ireland for L. li. a yeere, then in England for CC. li a yeere. (Payne 1841: 6–7)

Colonists can live in Ireland for a quarter of the price of England. Payne argues that Ireland actually grows more crops and vegetables than its population can consume, a potent contrast to the years of dearth that England was to experience in the 1590s after a series of crop failures, but also a pointed contrast to Edmund Spenser's famous description of the Munster famine after the Desmond Rebellion (Spenser 1997: 101–2). Payne undoubtedly protests too much and his description of Ireland betrays more than a hint of nervousness in his insistence that the Irish are unswervingly loyal to their English masters. The resemblances to Thomas Harriot's arguments are hard to ignore. Harriot also provided long lists of the abundant crops to be found in Virginia; tried to make the Native Americans seems as close to their European counterparts as possible; argued that the natives were gentle people who posed no threat to the settlers; was keen to counter negative reports of the colony; and professed that they were eager to be converted to Christianity. One suspects that Payne was deliberately modeling his description on that of Harriot, suggesting that colonial literature could be transferred from one area to another.

What conclusions can be drawn from this brief analysis of the relationship between English colonialism in Ireland and the Americas? The short answer is that there obviously was a relationship between the two and that we can certainly argue that there was a colonial expansion westwards. There are clear connections between colonial activity in Ireland and the Americas, often because the same people were involved in each area. There were also some connections between colonial propaganda produced to persuade people to emigrate, and the experience of colonialism in each country had an influence on that in the other. But we must also be careful in assuming that there was a clearly formulated plan and that once the English had started to move into Ireland in significant numbers it was only a matter of time before they started to arrive in North America. There was no real government control over colonialism. It is true that occasionally projects were sponsored by the Crown, but finance was in short supply, and colonial projects developed in a piecemeal fashion. Colonial literature suggests that authors turned more to the works of the ancients to plan and explain their actions than to contemporary accounts and histories.

There are important differences between colonial activity in Ireland and America, which also need to be considered. Ireland was supposedly a sovereign territory of the Crown, acquired by right of conquest, either through the mythical actions of Arthur, king of the Britons, or through the surrender of the Irish king to Henry II in the twelfth century. Its subjects should therefore obey the English monarch as their English counterparts did. The colonies established in America had a rather different and more confusing status. For some, they were on a par with the lands that the monarch ruled in Britain and Europe; for others, they were self-contained entities in a foreign land, a reality that grew more obvious as the seventeenth century progressed and more colonists departed for New England (Calder 1981). Colonists in Ireland were subjects existing within the territories of the Crown; those in America had often left the motherland to establish their own communities, a crucial difference that helps to explain the complicated and divergent colonial histories of the two nations.

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13
The French *Relation* and Its "Hidden" Colonial History

Sara E. Melzer

April, 1613: the news was spreading like wild fire. Barbarians were at the gates of France. They were not there to batter them down. They did not have to – they were graciously invited in. The Capucin Church, along with King Louis XIII and the Regent Queen, had issued that invitation. These "barbarians" were Amerindian men, six of them from the Toupinambou tribe in Maragnan, Brazil. Capucin Father Claude d'Abbeville and French Admiral Razilly had spent six months there to expand "the Empire of the Cross" and establish a French colony. Now they were bringing them back to France, where hordes of people honored them with processions, ceremonies, and cannon fire. Arriving in Le Havre, these Toupinambou Indians performed on cue: they entered a church where they sang the *Pater noster* and *Ave Maria* in their native tongue. The French onlookers were enthralled. In his text describing this event, Father d'Abbeville included an image of a barbarian, renamed Jacques Patou, in his native dress (or rather, undress) (figure 13.1).

In Paris, they were greeted by the king and queen who served as their godparents, presided over their "frenchification," and assisted in their grand baptismal ceremony before the gathered masses. A second ceremony followed this first one: they were married in a grand public spectacle to French young women especially chosen for this event. The king and queen took a particular interest in a 12-year-old Toupinambou named Pyrauana, who "was a slave on the island of Maragnan . . . The king and queen's devotion was such that they took particular care [to have him sent daily to the Capucins] to be instructed so that he received the same grace as the others and was made a child of God by means of sacred Baptism" (Abbeville 1614: 378). They then gave this young boy to the Marquis de Courtenault, who continued his instruction and served as his godfather.

Reminding us that these creatures were once "cannibalistic animals, Man-eaters" (ibid: 372), d'Abbeville then described how, after their baptism, they were all renamed Louis "to make the name of the King, their godfather, more commendable among the Barbarians. [His Majesty] freely gave his consent, and so they were all

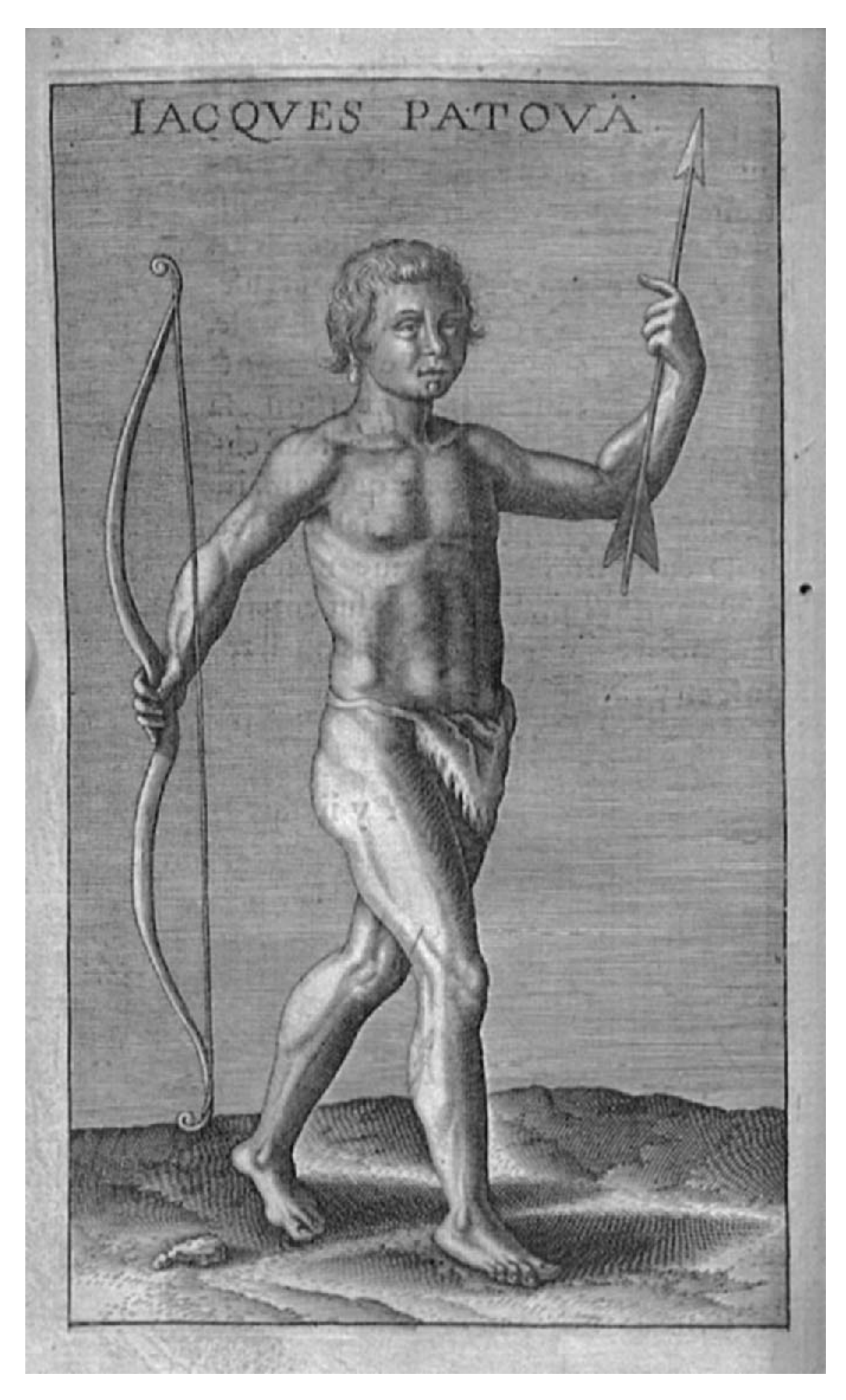


Figure 13.1 Native of the Toupinambou tribe in Brazil brought to France. Reprinted by permission of the Bibliotec Nacional Digital.

named Louis" (ibid: 369). Thus *Iapouay*, the son of *Tangara*, which meant Oyster Shell, became Louis Jean, *Ouaroyio* became Louis Henri, and *Itapoucou* became Louis Marie.

The baptism was more dramatically publicized than the marriage, but the two were linked, as the seventeenth-century poet Malherbe observed: "The Capucins, in order to show full courtesy to these poor people, are intent on finding some devout women for them to marry....There are women ready for them...only their baptism is necessary before the weddings can be performed, allying France with the Island of Maragnan" (Malherbe 1841: 315–16). Father d'Abbeville was so eager to publicize the transformation and integration of these "ravaging wolves" into the heart of the French community that he did not stop at simply staging these two media-spectacles (Abbeville 1614: 370). He also penned a *Relation* to describe them for posterity.

This story is nothing short of astonishing. In fact, it is so astonishing that many scholars might dismiss it as anomalous or even doubt its veracity. Such skepticism would not be unfounded. If there is one era in all of French literary history in which we would *least* expect the church and state to open up their doors to creatures deemed "filthy," "crude," and "barbaric," it would be *le grand siècle,* a period obsessed with purity, politeness, civility, refinement, and elegance. For the church and state to foster marriages with "savages," no matter how "civilized," seems inconceivable, especially given that the classical age cultivated strict boundaries to safeguard those inside the community from outside contamination.

This essay has two major goals. The first is to uncover this "hidden" colonial history and to argue that this story is emblematic of an important undercurrent in the classical age. Since this history runs directly counter to our received opinions about the seventeenth century, my second goal is to anchor it in a discussion of my source material: the *Relations*. The *Relations* are a genre as unknown to most literary scholars as the history itself, for both have been erased from conventional constructions of French history. My discussion of this history and its sources, then, are intertwined. The solidity and significance of this history depend on the status of the *Relations* as texts. If marginalized individuals had written these texts for private purposes, the history they reveal might be of minor consequence. However, many were written for public consumption, officially sanctioned, and even became "bestsellers," as we will see. Conversely, the importance of the *Relations* as texts depends on the kinds of stories they tell. I will argue that the stories recounted in the *Relations* not only reveal this "hidden" history, but also implicitly articulate a theory of colonization, which one seventeenth-century *relateur* called a "voluntary subjection." Given that there were few, if any, systematic, theoretical discussions of colonization during this period, the *Relations* take on an increased importance in French history.

In calling this history "hidden," I do not mean to suggest that I am the first to discover either the *Relations* or the history they reveal. In recent decades, historians and anthropologists have increasingly turned to the *Relations* to understand French Canadian history and Native American culture. Although many have referred to the colonial policy described therein, few have focused on it, albeit with some notable

exceptions (Jaenen 1976; White 1991). I characterize these texts and their colonial history as "hidden" because they are not widely known outside the circle of historians and anthropologists who specialize in North America. However, specialists of France's literature, culture and history will find them important since they are as much about France as about the "savage" Other. If I use the term "savage," it is for two reasons. First, it was the term that writers of *Relations* used the most frequently to designate the Amerindians. Second, it underscores the force of their Otherness for Europeans. As such, it renders their inclusion in the French, Catholic community all the more striking.

In his pioneering work, Cornelius Jaenen (1976) has characterized this colonial strategy as "assimilationist," although the term had not yet been invented. This seventeenth-century policy is important because it marks the official beginning of France's most basic and enduring stance towards the Other. The nineteenth and twentieth century state would adopt assimilation as its strategy in its colonial endeavors in Africa and Asia, although it interpreted assimilation more restrictively, forbidding inter-marriage and minimizing inter-cultural contact. To this day, assimilation remains the state's ideal for dealing with the Other in its hotly contested debates about immigration. The seventeenth century policy to transform "savages" into French Catholics laid the groundwork for the more famous nineteenth century effort to transform "peasants into Frenchmen" (Weber 1976) as part of its internal colonization.

The *Relations* as Genre

I begin my story about this "hidden" history with a discussion of my source material – the *Relations*. In general, a *Relation* is a narrative – in the form of letters, histories, reports, or stories – in which a voyager travels to any foreign land (or remote parts of France) and offers observations about its inhabitants' customs, habits, manners, beliefs, and practices, including commentaries about their relationship to the French. Voyagers might also describe their land, geographical features, ports, and natural resources, as well as the wars the French engaged in to gain a stronghold in the part of the world under consideration.

Relations circulated widely among the French reading public and many became bestsellers. As a testament to their popularity, more than 1,300 *Relations* of voyages were in print by the end of the seventeenth century, according to Furetière's *Universal Dictionary* (1690). As a whole, the *Relations* took the reading public by storm. They were such a grand success that, by the 1660s, no texts were more eagerly devoured than travel narratives. Jean Chapelain wrote in 1663: "Our nation has changed its reading taste. Instead of novels, which have declined in popularity with *La Calprenède*, travel literature has been on the rise and is now all the rage at court and in the city" (Chapelain 1883: 340–1). The taste for the *Relation* was so strong that writers anthologized them, compiling reports from voyages to several different parts of the

world. For example, French voyager Henri Justel combined *Relations* from various parts of Africa and America in his *Recueil de divers voyages faits en Afrique et en Amérique*. One anthologized author in this volume wrote: "These voyages have become so common that they are known in the smallest detail to practically every European" (Justel 1674: preface).

In France, the *Relations* emerged within a religious, political, and economic context, each of which underlined their official status.

The Relations *and the Catholic Reformation*

The *Relation* in France was an official arm of the Catholic Reformation, a movement of religious revival from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth centuries, which stirred up an evangelizing fever (Dompnier 1985). To spread the word of God, the church sent out missionaries to visit places the world over. The church became more aggressive than it had been in the past to compete with Protestants in their battle for the souls of the nation – and of the world. The *Relations* were reports that the Capucins, Recollets, Jesuits, and Sépulciens were all required to write about the people they visited and about their missionary activities.

At first the *Relations* were private reports that missionaries wrote to confide in their superiors about their progress. But soon they were being published and became key instruments of Catholic expansion. The Catholic Reformation was a time of pious propaganda, with each religious order competing with the others to gain ascendancy in the public consciousness. As publicity ploys, the *Relations* cultivated the art of seduction. The readers they were most interested in seducing were philanthropists needed to finance their missionary endeavors. They also aimed at enticing potential recruits, enlisting more "soldiers of God." As always, these reports were designed to curry favor with the king, and more generally with the reading public.

Father d'Abbeville wrote his *Relation* about the Toupinambou Indians to publicize the success of the Capucin order and of the Catholic faith. His *Histoire de la mission des pères capucins* first detailed his voyage to Brazil and described the Toupinambou customs, habits, and beliefs before reporting how these "savages" came to France, were publicly baptized, and married. His text was printed in a special ornately decorated edition, complete with eight engravings. Published in Lyon and Paris in 1613 along with a translation in German and Italian, his *Relation* was so successful that it was necessary to print two more editions the following year. D'Abbeville's text was part of a larger media blitz that included the publication of a total of 15 books and pamphlets designed to attract maximal attention to these extraordinary events.

The Relations *and the politics of expansion*

The *Relations* were also a tool of political and economic expansion. Samuel Champlain, in his *Voyages, 1604–7*, argued that economic gain would promote France's political expansion and greatness. He wrote that what had raised ancient Rome to greatness

was its trade "transacted on the sea." The Romans were able to achieve their "sovereignty and mastery over the entire world" because they could "fill up the regions of the interior with the objects of beauty and rarity obtained from foreign nations" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 100). Champlain urged that France achieve a similar mastery in a similar way.

Some *Relations* were extremely concrete in demonstrating the benefits of economic and political expansion. Frequently, they offered extensive descriptions of natural resources in different parts of the world, detailing how that raw material could be transformed into commodities for the French market. Some even gave recipes for how to use the new food products or concoct medicinal remedies (Melzer 2003). Many missionaries were as attentive as the merchants to the economic benefits of expansion, for they wanted to appeal to potential donors.

Jesuit Father Le Jeune addressed Louis XIII and his minister Richelieu to argue for the advantages of economic and political expansion. With so much unemployment in France, many workmen had to go "begging their bread from door to door, some of them resort[ing] to stealing and public brigandage, others to larceny and secret frauds" (Thwaites 1896 JR, VIII: 9; [henceforth, JR]). Father Le Jeune thus argued that unemployed French workers should be shipped off to the colonies, a strategy that would "strengthen New France; for those who will be born in New France, will be French . . . The son of a French artisan born in Spain is a Spaniard; but, if he is born in New France, he will be a Frenchman " (ibid: 9, 243).

The Jesuit Relations

When it came to publicizing their missionary endeavors, no religious order was as energetic, enterprising, or successful as the Jesuits. The *Relations Jésuites* were the most widely read, due in large part to the church's editorial practices. In 1632 the Jesuits received a virtual monopoly over France's missionary activity in the New World. They published a volume of reports every year from 1632 to 1673 that are now collectively known as the *The Jesuit Relations of New France*. These texts took on the aura of a serial drama, causing people both inside and outside the court to eagerly await the next installment. Father Paul Le Jeune wrote the first volume of the series in the dim light of a smoldering flame, in a musty, mosquito-filled cabin while the Amerindians indulged in raucous all-you-can-eat bear fat feasts. Yet he managed to create some lively, dramatic page-turners. He then sent them to his superior in Paris, Father Jacquinot, who was so riveted by them that he had them published. Overnight, they became the talk of the town, and the series was thus launched. Although the *Relations Jésuites* were conceived in a religious context, the rich details they offered about the life of the Amerindian Other fascinated a much wider readership.

Father Le Jeune became a cultural hero in France. His volumes had an appeal similar to our modern "reality TV" drama. Le Jeune described how he followed the "savages" into the woods for several winters to learn the language of the Montagnais and Algonquins. After 17 years in the wilds of Canada, he returned to Paris where he

became a regular fixture at court. He regaled the courtiers with tales of his experience, stirring up great interest in the New World. His audience included King Louis XIV and the Queen Mother, Anne d'Autriche, who held him in high regard. According to a contemporary observer, "he acquired the esteem and confidence of a very great number of people of quality. . . .The King himself and the Queen mother showed him affection" (Laflèche 1973: xv).

No volume appeared until it had been through a gauntlet of editorial committees. Each Jesuit missionary gave a written report of his activities to his superior in Quebec or Montreal, who then reviewed all the material and compiled it into a master narrative. Exercising great editorial control, the superior eliminated or rewrote any parts deemed inappropriate. His report then became subject to a second stage of scrutiny when he sent it back to Paris. The committee there was more interested in projecting the proper image than in historical accuracy. The Crown's publisher, the Cramoisy family, printed the master narratives and had them bound in vellum as part of a series of duodecimo volumes.

The distinctive style of the French Relations

The *Relation* was not unique to France. Travelers from other nations such as England, Holland, and Spain also wrote reports about their voyages. However, the French *Relations* were distinctively different because they had a strong narrative development, which contributed to their great success. Several centuries later when Thoreau wanted to read about life in the wilderness, he turned to the French *Relations Jésuites* rather than to the *Relation* of his own British tradition. The French *relateurs* wrote in greater detail about their experiences in the New World, offering developed portraits of its inhabitants, sketching out scenes that often read like a novella, giving a human face to the Other. For example, in one compelling drama in Illinois, a Frenchman ardently pursues the daughter of the Chief of the Kashaskia. Her parents are eager for the marriage but she rejects him because, having been converted to Catholicism, she finds the Frenchman insufficiently pious – she sees him as a debauched drunkard. Her father, furious with her for refusing the Frenchman, steals her French clothes and tries to prevent anyone from entering the church. Finally, after many adventures, the girl does marry him. The story ends with a grand finale of conversions that could upstage that of Corneille's *Polyeucte*. The native bride convinces her debauched French husband to convert to Catholicism. Her parents then convert and finally every member of the entire Kashaskia village in Illinois follows suit.

The British *Relations,* by contrast, were written in a dry, factual reporting style, focusing on information about the land, geography, and agricultural resources. This difference between the French and British writing styles in their *Relations* about the New World reflects the differences in their respective colonial strategies in the Americas (Sayre 1997). Because the French wanted to assimilate the Amerindians, they had to understand their psychology in order to bring them into the French fold. By contrast, the British, whose colonizing endeavor was more directly focused on

taking possession of the land, were less interested in understanding the Amerindians as a people.

The Politics of Assimilation

The stories in the *Relations* implicitly present a theory of colonization, although it is camouflaged in anecdotes seemingly so innocent that colonization hardly even appears at issue. These stories describe the nature of the French-Amerindian contact. The most striking and extraordinary feature of this contact was the French openness to the "savage" Other. Creatures outside the boundaries of civilization, such as alleged cannibals, could be "Frenchified" and "Christianized" and then enter the French Catholic community.

France officially encouraged a much greater level of intimacy with the colonized than did its European rivals – England, Holland, Spain or Portugal. Although Britain had one of the most famous mixed marriages of all time – between Pocahontas and John Rolfe – that was a distinct exception to the British policy, which actively discouraged mixed marriages. For example, the charter to settle South Carolina issued by England's Charles II placed the "savages" in the same category as "other enemies, pirates and robbers": persons who are to be displaced, not incorporated (Johnson 1992: 25). Governor Wyatt of Virginia wrote in 1623: "Our first work is the expulsion of the savages, for it is infinitely better to have no heathen among us, than to be at peace with them" (Johnson 1992: 25). From the very beginning of its colonial endeavors, the British expressed a very different attitude than did the French. England's King Henry VII issued the following "letters patent" in 1497, giving John Cabot official license to "subdue, occupy and possess" the "savages" as their "vassals and lieutenants" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 4). The case of Spanish and Portuguese colonialism is more complicated, since it did give rise to a widespread mixing of peoples. This was not, however, the result of an official policy that actively promoted it. Rather, the state did not consistently intervene to prevent it.

Assimilation is by definition a colonial strategy that is more open to the Other than are its alternatives. One possible approach would be to kill off the indigenous people. A second alternative would be to dominate the population in one of several forms, such as enslaving the inhabitants, coercing them into submission, or separating them on reservations, as the British ultimately did in their "Indian Reservation" system. Both strategies would minimize the need for much contact with the colonized. Assimilation, however, relying more on cultural force than on military muscle, necessitates the greatest level of contact with the colonized.

As a strategy, assimilation permits of varying degrees of openness, ranging from a minimal to a maximal level of contact with the colonized. In its seventeenth-century version, assimilation existed in its most open form – more open than at any other point in all of French history. The seventeenth-century French state and church officially embraced its maximal form, unlike their nineteenth-century counterpart.

In the seventeenth-century, the church and state fostered communal living arrangements so that the New World inhabitants would live, work, pray, and be educated together with the French. They also encouraged French families to adopt Amerindian children into their families. The governor of New France, Count Frontenac, adopted two Iroquois children into his household and wrote King Louis XIV that in so doing, he hoped to establish a model for other French to follow. Members of the nobility served as godparents to those Amerindian children sent to France to learn how to become French. But beyond this, both the state and the church aggressively pursued a policy of biological mixing, by offering dowries as an incentive to foster intermarriage.

Cornelius Jaenen (1976) has called this an "integrationist" model of assimilation and it remained the official position of both the church and state throughout the century. There were, however, missionaries and officials who encouraged a segregationist model. Following the example of the *reducciones* in Paraguay, they sought to separate the "savages" on *réserves* to avoid intimate contact. The success of this segregationist movement varied over time. The stance towards assimilation varied in relation to the portrait of the "savage." In general, many *Relations* present a polarized view of the Amerindians, vacillating between a "noble" and an "ignoble" savage. Nevertheless, in the seventeenth century, the image of the "noble" savage dominated, as did an "integrationist" mode of assimilation. Colbert, Louis XIV's minister, expressed the integrationist ideal most forcefully when in 1666 he wrote, referring to the French relationship to the Alquonkins and Hurons: "If it is possible to mix them over time, having the same law and the same master, they will thus form one people and one blood" (Rapport de l'Archiviste de la Province de Québec [RAPQ] 1930–1: 58). To achieve this goal, he insisted that it was necessary to "instruct the children of the savages and to render them capable of being admitted into the common life of the French, so that they only compose one people" (Clément 1865 III: 452). He repeated that the Amerindians be "instructed in the maxims of our religion and in our manners," so that "they can compose along with the inhabitants of Canada one people and by this means fortify the colony" (RAPQ: 147).

This "openness" to the Other, however, was conditional. The Amerindians had to be transformed into French Catholics. The creation of "one people and one blood," Colbert insisted, would not be achieved by synthesizing the customs of both worlds, or by allowing the Amerindians to preserve any part of their heritage. As Colbert put it, the goal was to "detach [the Algonquins and Hurons] from their savage customs and oblige them to adopt ours and especially to learn our language so that the French would not need to learn their language in dealing with them" (RAPQ: 58). The French would remain fixed and "pure" on their side of the divide. The Amerindians would do all the changing.

Insisting that assimilation did not mean a *métissage*, Colbert was formalizing a tradition of what we would call "passing" that had existed since the beginning of the century. The accompanying engraving (figure 13.2) from d'Abbeville's 1613 *Relation* contrasts with the first image of Jacques Patou (figure 13.1). Here, Ouaroyio,

renamed Louis Henri, is now transformed, for he looks almost French since he is fully dressed and holds a French lily. Father d'Abbeville describes him as "less dark than the others, of a face so well made that one would think him French rather than a foreign savage" (Abbeville 1614: 364). The French newspaper *Mercure François* reprinted segments of this account in 1617 and described how "one people" would result from the Amerindians' shedding of "their savage customs" and imitating French, Catholic ways. D'Abbeville had the Toupinambou chief formulate this notion of "passing" to the French Admiral Razilly as follows: "Our hope for our children, that they will learn God's law and your arts and Sciences, makes us believe that in the future we will only be one people and that others will take us for French" (*Mercure François* 1617: 171). Upon hearing these words, the French admiral nodded approvingly. The Toupinambou chief again repeated his hope that his tribe members "will over time come to resemble you [the French] such that we will make strong alliances with each other. Thereafter others will think that we are French" (ibid: 172).

At the same time that Father d'Abbeville was fostering "one people" with the Toupinambou in Brazil, French explorer Samuel Champlain was promoting the creation of "one people" with the Amerindians of New France. Since his allegiance was primarily to the king, he emphasized "Frenchification," the creation of "a French heart and a French spirit" more than a religious conversion, although both were important (Champlain 1929: 6). Here it should be noted that the church and state, despite their many conflicts, worked largely in tandem, since their respective interests in colonizing the New World overlapped. Like Father d'Abbeville, Champlain understood that "one people" could include intermarriage. As reported in the *Relations Jésuites,* Champlain told the Hurons in full council that "our boys will marry your girls, and we will only be one people" (JR V: 210). On another occasion, he told the Hurons: "We [French] would readily come into [your] Country, marry [your] daughters" (JR X: 25). Similarly, Jesuit Father Le Jeune favored intermarriage in his *Relation* of 1636: "These little savage girls [will be] brought up as Christians and then married to Frenchmen." The success of their endeavor "will lie in our succouring them, in giving them a dowry, in helping them in their marriages" (JR IX: 103).

The strategy of marrying French men to "savages" soon turned out to be more complicated than anticipated. Contrary to what one might expect, the problems were not from lack of interest on the part of the French men. On the contrary, they expressed great eagerness. Their marriage proposals, however, were met with continual rejection. They had expected that the "savages" would jump at the chance to "marry up." However, this was far from the case. In his *Relation* of 1636, Father Le Jeune described how the French governor in Quebec complained to the captain of the Tadoussac Amerindians that "the Savages were not yet allied with the French by any marriage; and that it could easily be seen that they did not care to be *one People* with us" (JR IX: 232). The French officials wanted to figure out how to foster more marriages.

The *Relations* offer numerous stories about French colonists courting Amerindian brides. However, most of their efforts proved unsuccessful, for lack of



Figure 13.2 Native of the Toupinambou tribe transformed into a French Catholic. Reprinted by permission of the Bibliotec Nacional Digital.

Amerindian interest. Despite this failure, I nevertheless insist on the importance of intermarriage for several reasons. First, it is symbolic. Given that inter-marriage remained the official ideal, it is emblematic of a remarkable openness to the Other, at least as compared with European rivals. Moreover, this ideal was openly and widely disseminated in texts undergoing rigorous editorial scrutiny, as already discussed. Second, French readers of the *Relations* probably assumed that inter-marriage was more wide-spread than it was in fact. The French readers of these stories probably concluded that the Amerindian women would soon yield to the unmistakable charm of their French suitors. Third, inter-marriage boldly accentuates a core issue for assimilation – the problems of establishing clear-cut boundaries between the "savage" and the "civilized." If the "savage" could climb up the ladder of civilization, the reverse was always possible, with the "civilized" backsliding into a condition of savagery.

Jesuit Father Le Mercier told a story that dramatized this problem. He described how the father superior at Iahenhouton visited the Huron chief there to help foster some French–Amerindian marriages. Father Le Mercier became concerned that in the past some Frenchmen wanted to marry Amerindian women "to become barbarians and make themselves completely similar to them" (JR XIV: 18). This was clearly unacceptable, since the whole point of intermarriage was "to make the [Amerindians] similar to us, to give them the knowledge of the true God and teach them how to keep the holy commandments so that the marriages that we were talking about would be stable and permanent" (JR XIV: 18–20). Father Le Mercier put his finger on the key danger that haunted the entire colonial endeavor, one that Father Le Jeune had expressed to Cardinal Richelieu. "I don't know if I myself am not becoming savage by conversing every day with the savages" (JR VII: 238).

Any colonial endeavor was, of course, open to the danger that some colonists would "go native." However, France was the most susceptible to this danger, potentially causing a more wide-spread "infection" because intimate contact lay at the heart of its strategy. The gravest danger would be a "reverse influence" in which the colonized would colonize the colonizer. A more subtle and insidious form of this "reverse influence" would be what Richard White (1991) has called a "middle ground," in which the Amerindians and the French would negotiate a combination of both worlds. Or the inter-cultural contact could simply evolve naturally into a cultural *metissage*. Father Le Jeune inadvertently described such an example, although he managed to deny it by seeing the resulting mix as simply a misunderstanding.

> I have noticed in the study of their language that there is a certain jargon between the French and the Savages, which is neither French nor Savage; and yet when the French use it, they think they are speaking the Savage Tongue, and the Savages, in using it, think they are speaking good French. (JR V: 113)

The danger of a "reverse influence" or a "middle ground" underlines that the thorniest issue of assimilation was one of boundaries. Assimilation was essentially a willed transgression of the boundaries separating the "civilized" from the "savage."

The Other cannot be fixed on the "savage" side of the divide. Nor can the divide itself be immovable, for it had to be sufficiently elastic to accommodate outsiders. In their expansionist endeavors to include the Other, the church and state temporarily dissolved the radical "us–them" dichotomy to expand the "us" portion of the divide.

This openness thus necessitated a corresponding closedness, affirming the existence of some boundaries to protect the identity and "purity" of that "us." Like a rubber band, the boundaries, once they were stretched outward to include the Other, then had to snap back in place to reaffirm the same basic principles of the division to make sure that whatever it was that constituted the "us" was not influenced by the "them." The central conflict, then, was how to expand and include the Other, yet not be influenced by it.

I would like to present how the stories in the *Relations* addressed this dilemma by implicitly articulating a theory of "voluntary subjection" in which the Amerindians would supposedly impose colonization on themselves. In so doing, they would reconstitute and reaffirm the protective boundaries. However, I would first like to respond to the question of why the French adopted such an open and "integrationist" model of assimilation.

The French adopted such a strategy for four reasons relating to France's economic and demographic needs, as well as to the practical difficulties of educating natives. First, France's economic interests in Canada were based on fishing, fur trapping, and trade. These kinds of industries could succeed only by cultivating the Amerindians' cooperation and trust (Nash 1982). Moreover, the French needed to learn new fishing and hunting techniques. They were dependent on "Indian guides" to learn how to survive in such treacherous terrain, especially in hostile weather. Champlain described how he got lost for several days without a native guide. The British economy, by contrast, enabled the colonists to be more self-sufficient. Because agriculture was the basis of the British colonial economy, the colonists were able to rely on the same skills of tilling the land that they had mastered in England. Moreover, their agricultural needs put them in direct competition with the Amerindians for land. Thus the British used military force to wrest the land away from the Amerindians. But it would have made no sense for the French to force the indigenous population into submission, for they were dependent on their help. Moreover, the French were vastly outnumbered. As such, they could not have survived without forging significant alliances and personal friendships with the people there.

A second factor was the relative slowness with which France developed its colonies. While England, Spain, and Holland had begun serious colonization in the sixteenth century, the French state did not really begin in earnest until the seventeenth century. The French made some attempts in the sixteenth century in Brazil, Florida, and Canada, but they were ill-conceived and failed. Thus, when Richelieu began to revitalize France's colonial efforts in 1627, there were less than 500 French people in New France. By contrast, there were 20,000 British in New England. Catching up to its rivals was not an easy task for France, since populating these remote lands was difficult. Finding enough women was no easy matter. In Canada especially, women

were scarce. When ship captains arrived from France, the first question they were asked was whether they had brought over any women. The difficulties of populating its colonies thus called for unusual measures. Intermarriage seemed better than a large-scale immigration from France, especially after the Thirty Years War when France could spare very few men to populate its new colony (Trudel 1997). Thus, the French needed the Amerindian women to populate this land quickly. The founders of Montreal wrote:

> If marriages are formed between the French and the Christian Savages, then in this way the country will easily be populated . . . And these small nations will multiply more in 10 years than they have in the past 100 years, which will be much to France's honor, for it will acquire many subjects capable of helping it one day and will also provide useful merchandise. (Daveluy 1965: 107)

Third, the French state and church favored mixed marriages because most French women were not seen as robust enough to survive the long trips over to the New World and to endure its harsh conditions. During the 1670s in particular, Colbert had numerous "daughters of the king" sent over from France whose duty it was to marry French colonists, quickly produce lots of children, and in their spare time, help with the chores in the settlements and cultivate the land. Not surprisingly, they were overcome with fatigue and thus had a very high mortality rate. They were not considered a good investment.

Fourth, there were many practical difficulties in educating "savages" in what it meant to be Catholic and French. The church and state could not rely on the traditional modes of education. There were no schools, or any institutions of learning, which the French could then take over. The French did create some schools and seminaries, but their teaching often fell on deaf ears. The traditional French method of instruction, based on the authority of abstract principle, failed to reach the Amerindians, who were not used to formal doctrine. Accustomed to freely roaming the woods, many Amerindians literally climbed the walls. Thus, the French had to devise an alternative approach.

The French church and state developed a method whereby the authoritative role of educator devolved to ordinary French Catholics who taught the Amerindians in the process of their simple, daily act of living. The French were to live in close, intimate contact with the Amerindians to serve as concrete, living examples of French and Christian behavior. Richelieu encouraged teaching by example:

> The only way to dispose these people to the true knowledge of God, was to populate said country with natural French Catholics, and *by their example* dispose these peoples to the knowledge of the Christian religion, to civil life, and to establish Royal authority. (*Collection de manuscrits* 1883: 62)

Similarly, Bishop Laval of Quebec, in describing the seminary he founded, wrote in 1668 that in order to succeed in his task of educating the Amerindians, "I was obliged

to mix in some French children with the savages, for by living together, the savages will learn from them their *moeurs* and language more easily" (Tetu 1913: 35).

However compelling France's economic, demographic, and educational needs were, they would not have been met without an ideological framework to justify them. Catholicism, with its belief in universalism, provided that ideological framework. However, this universalism is foreign to our modern sensibility, for it did not fix people in categories of biological differences we call "race." It posited that however physically "degenerate" one was, the soul remained in a state of potential grace due to the Incarnation, for all humans were salvageable in principle, as Hayden White (1972) has discussed. Even those peoples who supposedly had a double sex, no mouths, or feet turned backwards, as many contemporary travelers to the New World had reported, should not be denied their essential humanity. Despite their differences, they should be seen as possible converts, not enemies to be isolated or killed. In the *City of God*, St. Augustine articulated this inclusiveness when he wrote that Christianity seeks to include every "real man" no matter how "unusual to us may be the shape of his body, or the color of his skin, or the way he walks, or the sound of his voice, or whatever the strength, portion or quality of his natural endowments" (St. Augustine 1950–4: 502). St. Augustine's words echo loudly in the French assimilationist policy. Although this policy was not "racist" in the modern understanding of the term, it posited an equivalently strong "us–them" divide. This divide, however, was structured by different categories: religious faith and civility. These categories were as highly charged and divisive for seventeenth-century France as our notions of "race" are for us today (Goldberg 2002).

France's identification as a Catholic nation, then, provided the most fundamental foundation for France's assimilationist approach to colonization. Significantly, France's Protestant colonial movement did not foster assimilation (Lestringant 1999). The Protestants were not particularly interested in converting the Amerindians, for their major concern was to create settlements for their own people who were not always welcome in France. At best, the Protestants were indifferent to the indigenous people. Holland and England, as Protestant nations, did not seek to assimilate the indigenous people, for they often saw them as creatures to be discarded or set aside. Spain and Portugal, as Catholic nations, however, did permit assimilation, although they did not officially foster it, as did the French.

While France had always been a Catholic nation, the seventeenth century marked a decisive stage in its Catholic history. This was the moment of the Catholic Reformation, more commonly labeled the "Counter-Reformation," and generally seen as a counter to the Protestant Reformation. However, as Louis Chatellier (1997) has pointed out, the term "Catholic Reformation" highlights another key feature of this movement. The Catholic Church sought to reform itself in order to expand its "empire of the Cross" worldwide. The "discovery" of the New World provided a crucial background against which the church sought to carry out its expansionism. The specter of thousands of unformed creatures on the horizon fueled its conversionary fires. The Catholic Church wanted to lay claim to their souls, and also to prevent the

Protestants from doing so. After the Edict of Nantes in 1598, which ended the religious wars, the Catholic Church could finally focus its energies outwards. With a renewed intensity, the Catholic Church sent out "soldiers of God" to all parts of the world, but especially to the New World and to the Levant. The New World was a prime target because the Catholic Church regarded its primitive inhabitants as more malleable, with fewer layers of prejudices to counteract.

Voluntary subjection

With "integration" as the dominant mode of assimilation, thus confounding the establishment of clear-cut boundaries, the question was how it was possible to prevent a "reverse influence" or a slippage into a "middle ground." The *Relations* implicitly responded to this dilemma by dramatizing a theory of "voluntary subjection." According to this theory, the Amerindians were supposedly so eager to imitate the French and become like them that they would voluntarily impose colonization on themselves. Once they had crossed the great divide separating the "savage" from the "civilized," they would feel a difference in their hearts. This new feeling state would lead them to construct and police the boundaries themselves. These internalized boundaries would be all the stronger for being self-imposed.

According to seventeenth-century traveler and *relateur* Marc Lescarbot, the Amerindians were naturally drawn towards imitating the French. This imitation led to what he called a "voluntary subjection." As he wrote in his 1609 *Nova Francia*:

> The savages from about all around came to see the manners of the Frenchmen, and lodged themselves willingly near them:[] . . . they did make Monsieur de Monts judge of their debates, which is a beginning of a *voluntary subjection*, from whence a hope may be conceived that these people will soon conform themselves to our manner of living. (Lescarbot 1928: 22; my emphasis)

A "voluntary subjection" presumes the colonized's desire to freely "conform themselves to our manner of living." Imitation is the most tangible evidence of that desire. Many of the *Relations* present the Amerindians' supposed desire to be like the French as the logical outcome of their perception that the French way of life was superior to their own. Imitation represents their seemingly natural desire to improve their lives by "educating" themselves. As such, imitation would not appear connected to colonization; it would seem a natural and innocent activity. However, as Homi K. Bhabha has observed, imitation was far from innocent; it served as a covert form of colonization. For France, he wrote, "mimicry emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge" (Bhabha 1994: 85).

One of the most striking features of the *Relations* is how frequently the writers give the Amerindians a voice. However, this voice has a French ventriloquist behind an Amerindian "dummy." For example, Samuel Champlain gives voice to an Algonquin

Chief who "invites" the French into their land to have the right models before them to help civilize themselves:

> If you would do us the favor to come live in our country and bring your wives and children, and when they are here we shall see how you serve this God who you adore and how you live with your wives and children, how you cultivate and plant the soil, how you obey your laws, how you take care of animals, and how you manufacture all that we see proceeding from your inventive skill. (Champlain 1929: 146)

According to Champlain, the Amerindians' "one wish and desire is to be fully instructed in what they ought to follow and avoid" to be as civilized as the French (ibid: 147).

From this Algonquin's supposed intimate, first-person discourse emerges a covert theory of colonization. It is covert because the Algonquin addresses the French not as conquerors or colonizers, but as teachers. It is covert because the colonized supposedly asks for colonization, as if asking for a favor. In this optic, however, the colonized would allegedly not see it as colonization but as "education." Colonization gets camouflaged as a love affair, not a political act of domination. For the Amerindians, the love in question would be their supposed love for the French way of life; for the French, it would be an act of love and charity to help these "poor barbarians" benefit from the same kind of life they enjoyed.

The *Relations Jésuites* present the Amerindians as begging the French to enter their country and help liberate them from ignorance. The Amerindians are "asking for help and uttering the word of that Macedonian to Saint Paul, *Transiens in Macedoniam adjuva nos;* 'Come, help us, bring into our country the torch which has never yet illuminated it!' " (JR VI: 25). Or: "They are already tired of their miseries and are opening up their arms to us for assistance " (JR V: 32). These words resonate with the official seal of the Massachusetts Bay Colony that depicts an Amerindian saying, "Come over and help us" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 245).

Centered on an imitative dynamic, many stories in the *Relations* describe the "progress" of the Amerindians. The underlying assumption is that the Amerindians are similar to children or "little monkeys . . . [who] imitate everything they see done" (JR XXXII: 224). In a typical vignette, Father Le Jeune offered up the following "success story" in which the Amerindians now wear French shirts and are on their way towards "frenchification." Describing how they wear French shirts, Le Jeune offers an amusing anecdote much like the kind of "cute story" that parents often tell about their children who incorrectly imitate the adult world. The Jesuit Father chuckles over their current "mistake," for they wear French shirts "in a new fashion" (JR VII: 16–18). They wear them on top of their clothes, not beneath as do the French. Moreover, they never wash them. Grease then drips on them and soon "in no time they are as greasy as dish-rags" (JR VII: 16–18).

Father Le Jeune's ironic eye failed to see that this "new fashion" was not a mistake. Nor were the Amerindians even imitating the French. They were inventing some-

thing new. Their "new fashion" was a self-conscious, cleverly devised raincoat. They constructed it by dripping grease over the French shirts. Father Le Jeune, poking fun at the Amerindians' foolish lack of art and style, observed: "This is just as they wish them to be, for the water, they say, runs over them and does not penetrate into their clothes." The Jesuit father failed to see that the "savages" had the intelligence and the independence to devise something not foreseen by the French. The "raincoat" was a sartorial synthesis of both worlds that took an element of French fashion and adapted it to native ways of life. But this missionary sought to explain away this hybridized article of clothing by seeing it simply as a mistake, as a failed imitation of the French.

For Father Le Jeune, this anecdote's real message was that the "savages" are beginning to submit to a "voluntary subjection," for now they are on an "imitation track." The fact that they do not yet wear the shirts with French style does not matter. At least they are wearing clothes! And French clothes, no less. A sure sign of progress. He assumed that they wanted to be like the French but, like children, had not yet learned how to do so. Over time, they would certainly figure it out. The first step towards a "voluntary subjection" was the desire to imitate all things French.

Once the Amerindians had civilized themselves and crossed the imagined divide, the desire to imitate the French would further lead them to internalize French values, which in turn would cause them to shun their fellow tribe members. In so doing, they would be constructing an implicit boundary. As Champlain had an Algonquin chief tell the French commander: "Judging our life wretched by comparison with yours [the French], it is easy to believe that we shall adopt yours and abandon our own" (Champlain 1929: 146). In a similar scene from the *Relations Jésuites,* a Huron emerged from the baptismal sacred bath and repudiated his old life with violence, saying to a fellow tribe member: "[I] renounce all our follies, and trample under foot all our old customs" (JR XVI: 166). He then urged his companion: "Let us abandon our old ways to adopt those which are taught us, and which are better than ours" (JR XVI: 77). Repelled by their own heritage, the Amerindians would not seek to preserve any of it, but "trample it under foot."

A "voluntary subjection," a self-imposed colonization of the soul, meant that the Amerindians themselves were constructing and policing the boundaries separating the "savage" from the "civilized." The boundaries themselves could not exist as fixed, physical or coercive borders since they had to be sufficiently elastic to accommodate outsiders. They thus had to be made out of French cultural practices that could be imitated. Moreover, these practices had to stimulate a change in their feelings. Supposedly, the Amerindians would palpably experience the differences between France's "superior" civilization and their own. This felt difference would lead them to maintain those imagined cultural boundaries as real, to make sure they did not slip back into the more "primitive" world they now supposedly viewed with horror. Thus, one Jesuit missionary observed how when a Christianized and Frenchified "savage" girl "returns to the Cabins of the Savages, her father, very happy to see his daughter well clothed and in very good condition, does not allow her to remain there long, sending her back to the house where she belongs" (JR XI: 93). The girl's more

"civilized" clothes and appearance constitute a boundary. Even her father feels their effects and abides by this implicit social or cultural law, since he instinctively understands that his own daughter now belongs on the opposite side of the imagined divide. He does not seek to keep her partly on his own. The effects of contact with France's presumed superior civilization would lead the Amerindians to maintain the strict boundaries – to keep the identity of the "us" pure and intact.

The boundaries exist, then, not as divisions imposed from on high by an external authority. Rather, they exist as internalized feelings that seem to emerge "naturally" from the inside – from the Amerindians' supposedly heart-felt desires to imitate the civilized world of the French and to flee their own. These boundaries result from the effects the Amerindians presumably experienced in their newly transformed souls, within new "structures of feeling." The positive flip side of this "voluntary subjection" is what the French have come to call their "civilizing mission."

The modern reader now looking back on this period might rightly accuse the French of deluding themselves into believing that their "colonizing mission" was really "civilizing mission" and that they were not occupiers but liberators, holding up the torch of enlightenment. Aimé Césaire attacked such *naïveté* in his famous *Discourse on Colonialism* (1972), lambasting France's "civilizing mission" in French Africa. But however deluded they may have been, many French colonists were no doubt genuine, making many sacrifices, however misguided, to help those whom they viewed as in need of their help.

My goal is not to praise or blame the French colonial endeavor, but simply to illuminate it by pointing out that what the French were doing to/for the "savages" was not fundamentally different from what they were doing to themselves *vis-à-vis* the ancient Greeks and Romans. Even in *le grand siècle*, many French humanists feared that France still contained traces of its own barbarian past and needed to trample it under foot. Jesuit Father Bouhours and many others characterized French history as a struggle against its barbarian past (Bouhours 1920). The French were still not yet quite at the top, fully civilized. That honor still belonged to the ancient Greeks and Romans, which is why the French humanists' desire to imitate the Ancients dominated the world of letters in seventeenth-century France. In many senses, one could argue that their imitation of the Ancients placed them in a "voluntary subjection" towards the Greeks and Romans, even though they were long since dead (Melzer forthcoming).

Just as the Greek and Roman civilizations had served as authoritative models for France in its quest to civilize itself, now France, in turn, would play an analogous role for the Amerindians. The Amerindians would be proud to become "New France," just as "Old France" had proudly proclaimed itself the "New Rome." Like its Roman model, the French colonial strategy was based on an implicit art of seduction, attracting others into its world by the supposed magnetic force of its culture. People everywhere would be banging at its gates, clamoring to be part of France and its civilization. Thus, the French could accomplish its "colonizing/civilizing" mission with the elegance and refinement that has come to be France's hallmark. France's

cultural authority and magnetism meant the French would not have to compromise or accommodate the peoples they were trying to "colonize/civilize." Like God, they were the prime movers, themselves unmoved.

In point of fact, as Richard White (1991) has shown, the French did have to move. And they moved towards a "middle ground," significantly influenced by Amerindian ways. Writers in the seventeenth century, however, were not prepared intellectually or psychologically to have this insight. Many stories in the *Relations* reveal how blind the French travelers were to the new hybridized culture that was evolving before their eyes. By framing many of the Amerindians' actions as imitations, albeit bad ones, the French travelers were able to deny the reality that both the French and the Amerindians were together creating something that was neither fully French nor fully Amerindian, but a mix of the two. But this denial provided an enabling fiction: to allow assimilation to continue.

It is a truism that the colonized gets trapped in the discourse of the colonizer. In this case, however, the French colonizers were trapped in their own discourse of authority, which blinded them to the "middle ground" they were helping to forge. Their own need to imitate the ancients fueled their denial, stimulating the false assumption that the Amerindians were imitating them. In a similar way, I would argue that literary history has also been trapped inside the colonizer's discourse of authority. We have focused so much on France's presumed cultural authority that we have blinded ourselves to a powerful and important undercurrent in colonial history.

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14
Visions of the Other in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Writing on Brazil

Elena Losada Soler

On April 22, 1500, three months after Vasco da Gama returned from his first trip to India, 12 vessels under the command of Pedro Álvares Cabral on their way back from a second expedition to India landed in what is present-day Brazil. At this time, Asia was the center of attention for the Portuguese. Africa, the place where they had discovered the profitability of colonial endeavors, had been a necessary and interesting enterprise for them. At this time, however, they placed all their expectations on much more distant horizons, rich and full of mythical undertones.

Throughout the process that led to the establishment of the sea route to the Orient, the Portuguese confronted successive forms of alterity. First, through contacts they established very early on in the conquest of Ceuta in 1415 and with Mauritanian merchants, black Africa was for Portugal a culture both different and familiar. Scholars document the presence of African slaves in Portugal throughout the second half of the fifteenth century, and "black voices" appear in literary texts such as *Fragua de Amor* (1524, "The Forge of Love") by Gil Vicente, Portugal's chief dramatist and lyric poet. Second, references to central Asia and the Far East date back to the conquests of Alexander the Great and recur after the thirteenth century and the expeditions made by the Venetians. Appearing for the most part in often-told legends, the Far East was part of European cultural history. However, a third form of alterity emerged: America, a place for which there existed no established parameters, no vague geographical references, or familiar languages (Pinto 1989: 221). Everything about the Americas was new; the image of a nascent world shaped the first visions of that territory. America thus became a site for the staging of fantasies: at first, as a variety of edenic utopias and later on, as many different images of hell.

Every first contact, whether it is a voyage of exploration, conquest, colonization, or evangelization, supposes an encounter with different levels of the unknown, and each of these implies a specific way of looking at that new reality, depending on what

voyagers expect to gain from it. For this reason, writers depicted Brazilian Indians in different ways: as objects of religious conversion, as obstacles to colonization, or simply as objects of study. Consequently, these depictions in large part reveal the goals Europeans had established for themselves. In the sixteenth century, Portuguese writing about Brazil shifted away from the edenic imagery found in the texts of Caminha, Pigafetta, and the *Relação do Piloto Anónimo* towards a demonization of native Brazilians in the promotional literature designed to attract settlers. In these texts, writers questioned the humanity of the "noble savage" who did not know the concepts "mine" or "yours," transforming Indians into the monster/cannibal.

Portuguese art also reflects this transition, as we can observe by comparing two paintings from the early sixteenth century. In what is possibly the first representation of a Brazilian Indian, Vasco Fernandes' *Adoraçao dos Magos* (Adoration of the Magi), ca. 1505 (Museu Grão Vasco, Viseu), portrays Balthasar, one of the wise men who came to adore the Christ child, as a Tupi Indian. Just twenty-five years later, an unknown artist, in a painting entitled *Inferno*, ca. 1530 (Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon), gives the Devil indigenous features.

These contradictory images are a product of a diverse catalogue of European gazes and their associated attitudes and intentions. This essay will discuss five such gazes: those of travelers in transit, Catholic missionaries, French Huguenots, propagandists of colonization, and captives who coexisted for long periods of time with the Indians.

Travelers in Transit

Historians debate whether the change of route in the Atlantic that took travelers to South America was accidental or intentional, and whether earlier voyages to this area actually took place. Neither a possible earlier voyage, nor contentions that Spaniards Vicente Pinzón and Diego de Lepe were the first Europeans to reach the coast of South America, however, changes the "status" of Pedro Álvares Cabral's expedition as the one that made first contact. Neither Pinzón nor Lepe remained in the area, their voyage had no productive outcome, and it left no verifiable evidence. Thus, the coast where Cabral set foot was "unknown land" for the Portuguese, more so than any other until that point. Three fundamental documents – the *Carta do Achamento* (*Letter of Discovery*) by Pêro Vaz de Caminha (1500), the *Relação do Piloto Anónimo* (*Report of the Anonmyous Pilot*, ca. 1502), and the letter from Mestre João Faras (the astronomer on the Álvares Cabral expedition, ca. 1502) – comprise the first testimonies of this initial contact.

The Cabral expedition, in which first contact with the inhabitants of the South American coast took place, lasted ten days. It was peaceful in nature, in contrast to the violent tactics employed by the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama to secure trading rights in Calicut, India, around the same time. When Cabral and his men landed in a cove near present-day Cabralia, the dominant tribe was the Tupis. This tribe became the antagonists in Portuguese writings about Brazil, rather than other tribes such as the Potiguar, the Tamoios, or the Aymores, considered even more savage. However, it

is significant that not one of the Tupis survived this encounter, which in reality was a clash of cultures (Couto 1995: 60–5).

Pêro Vaz de Caminha, an educated nobleman from Oporto who was traveling with Cabral to India to fill the position of scribe at the Portuguese fort in Calicut, made an official report of what he saw and sent it in the form of a letter to King Manuel. This text, the *Carta do Achamento*, is an essential document of Portuguese colonialism, but its impact was overshadowed by two competing texts. First, the sometimes fanciful assertions of the Italian navigator Amerigo Vespucci, who in 1503 or 1504 published a pamphlet that was widely read in Europe entitled *Mundus Novus* (New World), in which he argued that the lands he visited, discovered by Columbus a few years before, were, in fact, a new continent and not India. Second, by another text from the same expedition, but much simpler and of lesser value, entitled *Relação do Piloto Anónimo*. Caminha's letter, which was in essence a request for a royal favor for his son-in-law, was inexplicably lost in an archive in the Torre do Tombo in Lisbon and was not published until 1817. Even though it constitutes the first extended European gaze at Brazil, Caminha's letter did not directly shape the European imaginary of the newly discovered lands. Despite its late revelation, however, the text's influence on contemporary historians and anthropologists has compensated for three centuries of invisibility.

Caminha's gaze was that of a traveler whose real destination was somewhere else. With his eye and ambitions focused on his future post in India, Caminha gazes over the Porto Seguro coast like a passing traveler without an agenda of conquest or colonization. In many respects, as Rocha Pinto has pointed out, the *Carta do Achamento* is a clear example of "littérature du regard" in which a single person observes other human beings (Pinto 1989: 231). In these initial travel texts, descriptions of human behavior and the acknowledgment or denial of coevalness are much more important than a detailed description of nature, which would be the focus of later narratives. Caminha's gaze is unique because of its relative lack of overriding agendas. Each expedition undertaken in the sixteenth century, including Cabral's, had an intentionality that conditioned the voyagers' perceptions of reality. But because the fleet with which Caminha sailed was not sent to discover or explore Brazil, his account of the land and its people is uniquely neutral. A similar case is that of Antonio Pigafetta, a sailor on Magellan's expedition, for whom a brief stay on the Brazilian coast was merely a parenthesis in the achievement of the mission's goal to sail around the world. These travelers provide descriptions of the Brazilian Indians that become the foundation of one of the most enduring and ideologically charged myths of European culture: the "noble savage."

The stereotype of the noble savage has been exhaustively studied from historical, philosophical, and anthropological perspectives. As Hayden White states, "The theme of the Noble Savage may be one of the few historical topics about which there is nothing more to say" (White 1976: 121). Nonetheless, it is necessary to examine the primary characteristics of the stereotype in order to determine the extent to which initial European visions of Brazilian natives were crucial in the creation of the myth.

The noble savage is a manifestation of European nostalgia for the Garden of Eden in either of its two manifestations: the Judeo-Christian Paradise and the Greco-Latin Golden Age. This topos is closely related to that of utopias. We should not forget that Vespucci's letters describing Brazil were of great interest to the English writer Thomas More. It is no coincidence that Raphael Hythloday, the fictional sailor who narrates More's *Utopia,* is Portuguese.

The word "savage" comes from *selvaticus*, a Latin term that sets up a difference between inhabitants of nature and inhabitants of cities. This term's different definitions get deployed at different times for specific purposes. For example, "savage" has positive connotations during "naturalist" periods, such as the European Renaissance, in which thinkers saw the hand of the Creator in nature and considered perfection to reside in the proximity to a natural state. On the other hand, during periods which view nature as the source of misfortune, instinct, or original sin, "savage" came to mean cruel, not "civilized," lacking in *civilitas*, that quality conferred by the artificial and urban world of the *polis*. The word "barbaric," often used as a synonym for "savage," also has shifting connotations. "Barbaric," for the Greeks, was a classification only partially linguistic in nature. It indicated non-speakers of Greek, and as language and reason were closely linked for the Greeks, anyone whose language was incomprehensible was logically lacking in reason. This lack of reason, stemming from linguistic "deficiency," transformed the "barbarian" into a beast, who was similar to the negative version of the savage.

In the sixteenth century, however, "barbarian" no longer meant a non-speaker of Greek. For Europeans, barbarians were those who did not share the two basic references of their civilization: Christianity and classic culture. We can find a good example of this in the classifications made by Fray Jose de Acosta (1589) (Pagden 1982: 162–5). At the highest level of Acosta's scheme were "those who are not much estranged from reason and the customs of human species." This group possessed laws, cities, leaders, and a writing system, and could include the Chinese, and possibly the Japanese and some cultures of India. According to Acosta, these groups should be converted, just as St. Paul converted the Romans: through persuasion and by inciting their admiration.

The second level included those people who had no written language but did have a social hierarchy and religious rites. This would include the Aztecs (Europeans were not aware that the Aztecs did have a written language until much later) and the Incas. Europeans felt that these groups should be converted by words and symbols, using theater and music, as the Jesuits did in Brazil.

At the bottom of the classificatory scheme were "the 'savages' who are close to beasts and in whom there is hardly any human feeling.' They lack all communication with their fellow men" (Pagden 1982: 164). This group had no social hierarchy; they were nomads, did not cover their bodies, and in the worst cases, practiced cannibalism. Some of these characteristics – lack of social hierarchy, nomadism, and lack of body coverings – could have a negative connotation or, on the other hand, could be considered characteristics of a state close to nature. Acosta placed all of the tribes of Brazil and the

Caribbean in this group. According to him, these natives had to be treated like children, taken to villages, and once there the process of reeducation could begin.

This third group was, in Acosta's scheme, analogous to what Aristotle called "natural slaves," an unfortunate and misleading expression that the Western world used for centuries to justify slavery among certain groups. Unlike Aristotle, however, Acosta did not think that slavery was an innate quality. For him, New World natives were human beings, not a different species somewhere between humanity and animality. As humans, they were perfectible and capable of attaining salvation, which was Acosta's central concern. Furthermore, he felt it was vital to accelerate the "civilizing" process, for he believed that only when all people had gone through the three phases of barbarism and were united under Christianity, would the new millennium begin (Delumeau 1994, 1998).

Based on reports from the sixteenth century, the Enlightenment constructed a theory of the "noble savage." The texts of Baron de Lahontan – *Nouveaux voyages* (New Voyages), *Mémoires de l'Amérique septentrionale* (Memoires of North America), and *Dialogues curieux entre l'auteur et un sauvage* (Curious Dialogues between the Author and a Savage, 1703–4) – are fundamental in an analysis of this myth (Todorov 1989: 304; see also Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 373–83) and represent the flip side of the *Diálogo sobre a Conversão do Gentio* (Dialogue for the Conversion of the Indians) by Manuel da Nóbrega (ca. 1560), a text in which the Portuguese Jesuit practically abandons his endeavor, blaming his failure on the difficulties of the task of evangelization, which he attributes to the perverse nature of the Indians (see Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 81–92). Lahontan's point of departure in his dialogue with a Huron Indian from Canada is an egalitarian and universalist discourse: "Les hommes étant pétris du même limon, il ne doit point y avoir de distinction, ni de subordination entre eux" ("Since all men were formed from the same clay, there should not be distinction or subordination among them" (Todorov 1989: 305). In fact, as noted earlier, writers often conflate the discourse of the noble savage with utopian discourses and with the edenic imaginary from which it stems. That is why descriptions of the noble savage always contain a series of obligatory topics: natives unaware of the concept denounce private property; they are admired for their equality, an indication of the absence of hierarchy; they are praised for their liberty, which is viewed as the absence of submission, just as their sexual freedom is considered an expression of their affinity with nature; finally, their lack of greed, portrayed through references to their subsistence economy, is extolled.

Diderot's *Supplement au voyage de Bougainville* (1771) can be interpreted through these topoi. He vindicates the society of the Pacific Islanders, which he constructs within parameters completely opposed to those of Europeans, but nevertheless equally valid. It is a world in which humanity lives in essential harmony with its environment, in opposition to the dissonances of Western societies – the prelude to the concept of internal and external romantic schism.

Rousseau, reputedly one of the most fervent defenders of this concept, was in reality not convinced of the existence of the noble savage. What he wanted, as Todorov points

out, is "to know a state that has ceased to exist, and that perhaps has never existed, and will probably never exist, and of which we must nevertheless have a clear concept in order to judge our present accurately" (Todorov 1989: 310). Rousseau does not identify his concept of natural man with actual Natives, but considers that they allow us to surmize what humans in a natural state must have been like. Rousseau knows, however, that the Golden Age cannot be recovered, as it never really existed. By the end of the eighteenth century, the meaning of utopia had changed. Modern utopias no longer indicated the desire to return to a primordial state, but rather expressed the dream of future happiness.

Voltaire also makes his contribution – albeit a cruelly ironic one – to the fantasy of the noble savage and to primordial felicity in *Candide* (1759). The mythical utopian kingdom of Eldorado described in chapters 17 and 18 elicits the following malicious irony:

> Nous allons dans un autre univers, disait Candide; c'est dans celui-lá sans doute que tout est bien . . . la mer de ce nouveau monde vaut dájà mieux que les mers de notre Europe; elle est plus calme, les vents plus constants. C'est certainement le nouveau monde qui est le meilleur des possibles. (Voltaire 1992: 32)

> Now we will see a different world – Candide said – and you can bet one hundred to one that there, everything is for the best . . . the sea of this new world is better than our European seas: it is smoother, and the winds blow more regularly. Without a doubt this new world is the best of all possible universes.

In contrast with the egalitarianism espoused by Baron de Lahontan and as a counterpoint to the concept of the noble savage, other eighteenth-century texts developed the image of the evil savage. With the categorizing zeal so typical of this era, Comte de Buffon left us not only his scheme of zoological classification, but also a parallel classification of the human species that, despite the belief that all races shared an essential humanity, establishes immutable levels among them. Buffon affirmed the existence of hierarchical structures and made the recognition of these structures an essential attribute of humankind. He maintained that the absence of hierarchy, reason, and language was a distinctive characteristic of animality:

> Toute nation, où il n'y a ni règle, ni loi, ni maître, ni societé habituelle, est moins une nation qu'un assemblage tumultueux d'hommes barbares et indépendants qui n'obéissent qu'à leurs passions particulières. (Todorov 1989: 121)

> Every nation with no rules, no law, no master, no established society, is not a nation but a tumultuous band of barbaric and independent men who obey nothing but their own individual passions.

Buffon's classification served as the foundation for all racist theories of the nineteenth century, including those of Gobineau. According to this French naturalist, Northern Europeans occupied the top of this pyramid, with the rest of Europeans

placed directly beneath. Below them are Asians and Africans because, for Buffon, the lack of civilization produced the darkening of the skin: "La nature, aussi parfaite qu'elle peut l'être, a fait les hommes blancs" ("Nature, in its perfection, made men white") (Todorov 1989: 127). He comes to the conclusion that primitive humans were white and that any variation indicates degeneration. Further below these two races he places Native Americans and at the bottom Australian Aborigines. Instinctual racism and the fear of difference acquired "scientific" authority with this classification. From this perspective, the "savage" would always be inferior, always the "evil savage."

None of the texts that came from the *philosophes* and scientists of the Enlightenment would have been possible without the testimonies of sixteenth-century travelers, though they were far more modest and much less doctrinaire. When the Portuguese reached *Terra da Vera Cruz* (Land of the True Cross) they saw the embodiment of Ovid's words, a Golden Age in its purest state (it seems that this was the only point of agreement between Catholics and Protestants): temperatures that rarely changed throughout the year; amazing fruits (there is no sixteenth-century treatise on Brazil that does not contain a chapter on the pineapple); immense rivers that according to the Bible surrounded Paradise; and the presence of parrots, the only creature which still had the ability to speak after the Fall and which was characterized by the extreme longevity enjoyed in the Garden of Eden.

This purported longevity was another recurring theme. In fact, Ponce de Leon explored Florida in search of a Fountain of Youth. Europeans attributed extreme longevity to the Indians as proof of their innocence, and because they dwelt in naturally salubrious lands. The Lombard Antonio Pigafetta, who sailed with Magellan and entertained the Renaissance idea of certifying with his own eyes the veracity of what sailors had reported, affirms the following:

> Os brasileiros não são cristãos, nem tão pouco idólatras, porque não adoram nada: a natureza é a sua única lei. Vivem muitíssimos anos: os velhos chegam ordinariamente aos cento e vinte e cinco anos, e algumas vezes até aos cento e quarenta. Andam completamente nus, tanto as mulheres como os homens. (Pigafetta 1990: 29)

> The Brazilians are neither Christian nor idolaters because they do not worship anything: nature is their only law. They live long: their elders frequently reach the age of 125 and some reach 140. Both men and women walk about completely naked.

In his foundational study on the edenic elements in the formation of the Brazilian imaginary, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda points out a logical reason for the salubrity attributed to the land: once the sailors had left behind their poor seafaring diet and began ingesting fresh products, they experienced a fast improvement in their health: "el restablecimiento radical, obtenido a veces en seguida del desembarco, se presentaba con todas las apariencias de un suceso misterioso y sobrenatural" ("the quick improvement, sometimes produced just after landing, was perceived as a mysterious and supernatural occurrence") (Holanda 1987: 345).

In the first contact described by Pêro Vaz de Caminha, he articulated another essential element that reappears in Pigafetta: nakedness, which they interpreted as an indication of innocence and ignorance of sin:

> A feição deles é serem pardos, maneira de avermelhados, de bons rostos e bons narizes, bem feitos. Andam nus, sem cobertura alguma. Não fazem o menor caso de encobrir ou de mostrar suas vergonhas; e nisso têm tanta inocência como em mostrar o rosto. (Caminha 1967: 226)
>
> They are brown and reddish-skinned, with handsome faces and noses. They are well made. They go about naked, with no clothing. They do not bother to cover their bodies, and show their private parts as readily as they show their face.

He also observes that the Indians do not have any hierarchies:

> Entraram. Mas não fizeram sinal de cortesia, nem de falar ao Capitão nem a ninguém. Porém um deles pôs olho no colar do Capitão, e começou de acenar com a mão para a terra e depois para o colar, como nos dizendo que ali havia ouro. (Ibid: 227)
>
> They walked in, but did not bow, nor did they attempt to talk to the captain or anyone else. But one of them looked at the captain's gold chain and pointed to the ground and then again to the chain as if saying there was gold buried there.

The Portuguese interpretation of the gestures of the Indians is largely subjective, as if they are blinded by *aurea fames* (hunger for gold).

After some days had elapsed and he learned more about the Indians, Vaz de Caminha established a fundamental comparison: they were like animals, but not fierce animals; more like frightened birds, divine animals, still close to a primordial world:

> Homem não lhes ousa falar de rijo para não se esquivarem mais; e tudo se passa como eles querem, para os bem amansar . . . do que tiro ser gente bestial, de pouco saber e por isso tão esquiva. Porém e com tudo isto andam muito bem curados e muito limpos. E naquilo me parece ainda mais que são como aves ou alimárias monteses, às quais faz o ar melhor pena e melhor cabelo que às mansas . . . (Ibid: 242)
>
> You cannot speak in a loud voice or they will flee . . . from which I deduce that they are like animals, with little reason and thus meek. But in spite of this they take good care of themselves and they are very clean. This is why I think that they are more like birds or undomesticated animals whose feathers and furs are made more beautiful by the wind, unlike domestic animals . . .

At the end of the *Carta*, in summary, Vaz de Caminha gives an exact description of the noble savage:

> . . . esta gente é boa e de boa simplicidade. E imprimir-se-á ligeiramente neles qualquer cunho, que lhes quiserem dar. E pois Nosso Senhor, que lhes deu bons corpos e bons

> rostos, como a bons homens, por aqui nos trouxe, creio que não foi sem causa. . . . Eles não lavram, nem criam. Não há aqui boi, nem vaca, nem cabra, nem ovelha, nem galinha . . . Nem comem senão desse inhame, que aqui há muito, e dessa semente e fruitos, que a terra e as árvores de si lançam. E com isto andam tais e tão rijos e tão nédios que o não somos nós tanto, com quanto trigo e legumes comemos . . . Assim, Senhor, a inocência desta gente é tal, que a de Adão não seria maior . . . (Ibid: 250–1)
>
> These people are simple and good. Anything that we may want to teach them will remain imprinted in them. And if our Lord, who gave them sturdy bodies and good faces, as He does good men, has brought us here, I think it was for a reason . . . they do not work the land nor raise animals. There are no oxen nor chickens . . . they eat only those roots that are so abundant here, and seeds, and fruits and the trees they come from. And they are healthier and stronger than we are, with all the wheat and vegetables that we eat . . . that is why, Majesty, the innocence of these people is such, that Adam's would not have been greater . . .

Although this text was lost and remained unpublished until the nineteenth century, its images about contact with Brazil are identical to those in the *Relação do Piloto Anónimo*, a widely known text:

> Achárão huma gente parda, bem disposta, com cabellos compridos; andavam todos nus sem vergonha alguma . . . não havia ninguem na armada que entendesse a sua lingoagem . . . as mulheres andão igualmente nuas, são bem feitas de corpo e trazem os cabelos compridos. (Cortesão 1994: 145–6)
>
> They found brown-skinned people, of good countenance and with long hair, they walked about naked and unashamed . . . there was no one on the fleet that could understand their language . . . the women were also naked, they have good bodies and wear their hair long.

This is a vision of the Brazilian Indian that still resonates in the narrative of the shipwreck of the *San Francisco* written in 1596:

> Os índios conservam ainda algumas propriedades do estado da inocência, como terem por escusado o vestido . . . Vivem muitos casais em umas grandes casas, como um largo e comprido dormitório, e destas casas tem cada povo mais de dez ou doze, conforme a gente que nele habita, sem chaves nem arcas, nem memória de fechar ninguém as suas cousas porque outro lhas não furte . . . (Afonso n.d.: 179–80)
>
> The Indians still have some of the characteristics of a state of innocence, such as considering clothing superfluous . . . Many couples live in big houses, like a large dormitory, and there are ten to twelve of these houses in each village, depending on the number of people who live there. There are no keys, nor chests, nor the necessity to lock things up to keep them from being stolen . . .

It is surprising to find edenic descriptions in this text because of the late date of its composition, especially since the author is a Jesuit. Catholic missionaries, and very

specifically the Jesuits, created imagery of the Brazilian Indian that is far less favorable than the accounts produced by travelers in transit, although they did defend, after some initial doubts, the idea of the Indian as susceptible to salvation.

Catholic Missionaries

In the letters by Fray Manuel da Nóbrega, director of the first Jesuit mission established in Brazil (in 1549), we encounter an opinion that is very different from that of Caminha. The almost pagan image of the noble savage, full of innocence and lacking knowledge of sin, was unacceptable to the ideologues who adhered to the doctrine of original sin espoused by the Council of Trent. For Manuel da Nóbrega, Indians would always be on the side of evil, dominated by sensual appetites and blind to God's truth:

> Mas é de grande maravilha haver Deus entregue terra tão boa, tamanho tempo, a gente tão inculta que tão pouco o conhece, porque nenhum Deus têm certo, e qualquer que lhes digam ser Deus o acreditam, regendo-se todos por inclinações e appetites sensuaes, que está sempre inclinado ao mal, sem conselho nem prudencia. (Nóbrega 1988: 90)
>
> It is astonishing that God has given such fertile land for such a long time to such uneducated people, who barely appreciate it. They have no god and believe in any god that they are told to believe in. They are all ruled by sensual tendencies and appetites, and lean towards sin without wisdom or prudence.

This ignorance of God, which Caminha considered an advantage because it was thus easier to "stamp new print upon them," was a source of great difficulty for Catholic missionaries, who once again had to face what was both different and unknown. Directing a theological discourse to a Muslim or a Buddhist was, paradoxically, not as difficult as trying to do the same with people who allegedly lacked the very concept of religious structures. José de Anchieta, who did so much to overcome the great linguistic barrier between Europeans and American natives, pronounces:

> Nenhuma creatura adoram por Deus, somente os trovões cuidam que são Deus mas nem por isso lhes fazem honra alguma, nem comumente têm idolos nem sortes, nem comunicação com o demónio . . . (Anchieta 1988: 339)
>
> They worship no god, but they believe thunder is a god, but not even it receives any special honor, nor have they any idols or superstitions, nor contact with the devil . . .

Despite this, Anchieta persists in his attempts at conversion, and in response to the doubts expressed by Nóbrega in his *Diálogo sobre a Conversão do Gentio*, he affirms with conviction that all difficulties faced in the process of conversion – polygamy, the constant changing of names, the lack of constancy – would be solved "se houver temôr e sujeição . . . porque com os obrigar a se juntar e a terem igreja, bastou

para receberem a doutrina dos Padres" ("if there were fear and subjection . . . because forcing them to come together and placing them in a church would be enough to make them receive the indoctrination of the priests" (Anchieta 1988: 341). This is the origin of the colonial strategy of *reducciones* ("reduction"). Missionaries believed the nomadism of Brazilian natives was the central problem, and the best way to combat it was to confine the Indians to a space where they could not escape the One True Faith. Today, we know that this strategy kept many Indians from dying in the sugar cane fields, but it was also the cause of massive cultural genocide.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, Fray Fernão Cardim was lamenting the absence of religiosity in the natives. Nearly one hundred years of missionary work had not reached the desired objective because the "Other" multiplied, adopted a hundred different forms, and confounded the missionaries. When they thought they had converted the Tupininquins, other tribes arrived who were just as "blind" as the present converts had been. The process of evangelization became a Sisyphean task. The absence of a written language among the tribes, proof for Cardim of their barbaric ways, increased the difficulties of the undertaking:

> Este gentio parece que não tem conhecimento do princípio do Mundo, do diluvio parece que tem alguma notícia, mas como não tem escripturas, nem caracteres, a tal notícia é escura e confusa . . . (Cardim 1980: 87)
>
> These infidels are unaware of the Beginning of Time and the Flood. They seem to have something of value to transmit, but as they have no written language, no letters, that information is obscure and confused . . .

It is important, in the texts of Fernão Cardim, to highlight elements of edenic discourse, distorted to fit the necessities of Catholic morality:

> Todos andam nus assim homens como mulheres, e não têm genero nenhum de vestido e por nenhum caso *verecundant*, antes parece que estão no estado de innocencia nesta parte, pela grande honestidade e modestia que entre si guardão, e quando algum homem fala com mulher vira-lhe as costas. (Ibid: 90)
>
> Everybody, men and women alike, walks about naked and not *verecundant* [shamefacedly]. It would seem that these lands are in a state of innocence due to the immense honesty and modesty that they have with one another and when a man talks to a woman, he turns his back.

The use of the Latin verb *verecundor* – *verecund*, timid, bashful – is significant, especially in the context of theology based on the Council of Trent. If the Indians lack shame, it is because they have not gone through the experience of sin that caused Adam and Eve's expulsion from Paradise; that is to say, they do not know original sin and are in a "state of innocence." This being the case, is their conversion meaningful? Was Cardim aware of the dangerous implications of his description of the noble savage? Furthermore, there is a contradiction between the first and second part of this

statement: why, if they are in a state of grace, does the man turn his back while talking to the woman? Was it because he could not look at her nudity? Baroque thought is obsessed with that tempting female flesh.

The Huguenots

In sharp contrast to the Jesuits' vision is that of the French Protestants who, led by Nicolas Durand de Villegaignon, fled France in 1555 and established the colony of *La France Antarctique* and Fort Coligny in Guanabara Bay, southeastern Brazil. Their utopian project was brief and tragic, but it left behind two very important texts: *Les Singularitez de la France* Antarctique (Singularities of Antarctic France) by André Thevet (1557) and *Histoire d'un voyage faict en la Terre du Brésil* (History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil) (1578) by Jean de Léry. Extremely personal and idiosyncratic, Léry's account is an interesting representative of this particular gaze, precisely because of its strong subjectivity. In a highly ideological move, Léry uses the Tupinambas as a contrastive mirror and as a vehicle to critique the decadent Catholic France the Huguenots eagerly left behind in the old world. Furthermore, he illustrates that because definition and description proceed by contrasts, a description of the "Other" is always an implicit description of oneself.

Léry transplanted religious conflicts to the New World. He interpreted the persistence of cannibalism as a reminder of the failure of Catholic evangelization. But his implications went even further: what was worse, he asked, uncivilized humans who eat other humans, or civilized humans – Catholics – who "mange-Dieu," devoured God? The theological controversy that was tearing Europe apart found a new screen – the Indian – upon which it could be projected.

It is precisely Léry's complex uses of the Indians that renders his description so important. In this text we find old clichés such as the extraordinary longevity of Natives: "Davantage, combien que plusieurs parviennent jusques à l'aage de cent ou six vingt ans . . . peu y en a qui en leur vieillesse ayent les cheveux ni blancs ny gris" ("Furthermore, many of them reach the ages of 100 or 120 years. . . . There are few who in their old age have white or gray hair" (Léry 1994: 211); or the innocent nakedness of the children, which highlights the controversy over original sin: "tant hommes, femmes qu'enfants, non seulement sans cacher aucunes parties de leur corps, mais aussi sans monstrer aucun signe d'en avoir honte ny vergongne" ("both men and women as well as children, do not cover any part of their body, and do not show any sign of shame" (ibid: 214).

This account is somewhat analogous to the texts of Montaigne, Léry's contemporary, whose first two volumes of *Essais* appeared in 1580, two years after the first edition of *Histoire*. Indeed, the philosopher appropriated many elements from the Calvinist who had been transformed into an accidental ethnographer. In both authors we find the desire to relativize anthropophagy and not to turn this practice into a reason for demonizing the Indian as Catholic priests had done, but

rather to use it to establish a comparison with European "moral anthropophagy." Léry affirms:

> Parquoy qu'on n'abhorre plus tant desormais la cruauté des sauvages Anthropophages, c'est à dire, mangeurs d'hommes: car puisqu'il y en a de tels, voire d'autant plus detestables et pires au milieu de nous, qu'eux qui, comme il a esté veu, ne se ruent que sur les nations lesquelles leur sont ennemies, et ceux-ci se sont plongez au sang de leurs parents, voisins et compatriotes . . . (Léry 1994: 377)
>
> There is no need to be horrified by the cruelty of the anthropophagic savages, that is to say, man-eaters, for there are others like them, even more despicable and evil among us. As we have seen, they consume enemy nations, while these savages consume the blood of their relatives, neighbors and other natives . . .)

In his famous essay "Des Cannibales" (On Cannibals), Montaigne presents a vision of Brazil as an embodiment of Ovid's Golden Age:

> C'est une nation . . . en laquelle il n'y a aucune espèce de trafique . . . nul nom de magistrat, ny de superiorité politique; nul usage de service, de richesse ou de pauvreté . . . Les paroles mesmes qui signifient le mensonge, la trahison, la dissimulation, l'avarice, l'envie . . . inouies. (Montaigne 1939: 213)
>
> It is a nation . . . where there is no traffic . . . there are no magistrates nor is there any political hierarchy; there are no services, no wealth, no poverty . . . words that signify lie, treason, concealment, avarice, greed . . . unheard of.)

He adds, along the same lines as Jean de Léry:

> Je ne suis pas marry que nous remerquons l'horreur barbaresque qu'il y a en une telle action, mais ouy bien dequoy, jugeans bien de leurs fautes, nous soyons si aveuglez aux nostres. Je pense qu'il y a plus de barbarie à manger un homme vivant qu'à le manger mort, à déchirer, par tourments et par geénes, un corps encore plein de sentiment, le faire rostir par le menu, le faire mordre et meurtrir aux chiens . . . que de le rostir et manger apres qu'il est trespassé. (Ibid: 217).
>
> I do not regret making remarks on the barbaric horror that such an action represents, but that, passing judgment on their faults, we remain so blind to our own. There is greater barbarism in eating a man alive than a dead, in tearing apart, through torture, a body that is still full of sensibility, in burning it, in having dogs bite and bruise it . . . than to roast it and eat it once it is dead.

Montaigne identifies a basic question: is human conduct "natural" and innate, or is it determined by custom and circumstances and, therefore, modifiable? In his essays, he resolves this debate in favor of habit. Once he establishes this premise, he can also consider religions a form of social construction. There would be no reason to choose one custom over another, or indeed to scorn one and elevate another. In this way, Montaigne manifests an unprecedented cultural tolerance within the context of

European religious wars, although Todorov (1989: 58) expresses his suspicions about this tolerance.

Propagandists of Colonization

This relativist image of Indians was possible from the perspective of those who had left Europe, fleeing from intolerance, in search of a "new world" where they could establish a utopia, or when ships that had somehow gone astray found themselves for ten days in an unknown land. But when voyagers saw the *Terra do pau brasil* (Land of brasilwood) as an economically attractive place, everything changed. The land was divided into *donatarias* (parcels) where plantations (first sugar cane and then coffee and cocoa) proliferated. Later, gold and precious gems were discovered in the land where "God's fledglings" lived. This is the moment when the image of the Indian completely changed: the noble savage gave way to the evil savage, a barbaric cannibal, against whom it was necessary to wage a "just war" that would allow the enslavement of the Indians and the seizing of the land that they were not even aware was theirs. The texts whose main purpose was to attract colonists to Brazil were written with these goals in mind. These texts had to be very carefully calibrated: while it was necessary to demonize the Indians in order to justify the use of force to subdue them, to dwell excessively on their cannibalism and savagery made colonial expeditions seem risky and could have the effect of dissuading investors.

An example of this finely tuned strategy are the two treaties by Pêro de Magalhães Gandavo, a noted humanist and friend of Luis de Camões, Portugal's great national poet and author of the epic poem *Os Lusiadas* (The Lusiads) (1572), which describes Vasco da Gama's discovery of the sea route to India. In *Tratado da Terra do Brasil* (1570), dedicated to Cardenal-Infante D. Henrique, chief inquisitor in Portugal, Gandavo presents Indians in derogatory terms from the "animal" lexical field, although some aspects of his characterization suggest hope for a more positive assessment:

> Chamão-se Aymorés, a lingoa delles he differente dos outros indios, ninguem os entende, são elles tam altos e tam largos de corpo que quasi parecem gigantes; são mui alvos, não tem parecer dos outros indios na terra nem têm casas nem povoações onde morem, vivem entre os matos como brutos animaes . . . (Gandavo n.d.: 32)
>
> They are called Aymores, their language is different from that of other Indians. Nobody understands them. They are tall and strong, they look like giants. They are very fair-skinned, they do not look like other Indians from these lands. They do not live in houses or villages. They live in the forest like wild animals . . .

The innocent birds in paradise that Caminha described have now turned into wild animals.

However, the natives have not changed; rather, the intentions of the European who gazed upon them have. Gandavo produced *Tratado da Terra do Brasil* and *História da Província Santa Cruz* (1575) to attract new colonists to Brazil. They were propagandist vehicles that demonized Indians in order to justify the occupation of a territory that he skillfully described as a fertile land of abundance where the life of the white colonists was almost perfect: "Todos têm remédio de vida e nenhum pobre anda pelas portas a pedir como neste reino" ("Everybody earns their keep and there are no mendicants as there are in this kingdom") (Gandavo n.d.: 41). Perfection would be complete if it were not for the "savages" that "vivem bestialmente sem ter conta, nem peso, nem medida" ("live like animals with no way to count or weigh or measure") (ibid: 50). These "savages" did not seem to have human reason and, as ultimate proof of their inhumanity and therefore a further rationalization for the justice of their destruction, they were cannibals:

> Finalmente que são estes indios mui deshumanos e crueis . . . vivem como brutos animaes sem ordem nem concerto de homens, são mui deshonestos e dados à sensualidade e entregão-se aos vicios como se nelles não houvera rezão de humanos . . . Todos comem carne humana e têm-na pela melhor iguaria de quantas pode haver . . . (Ibid: 53)
> Finally, these are very inhumane and cruel Indians . . . they live like wild animals without order and do not behave like human beings. They are very dishonest and given to sensual passions and they give in to vices as if they had no human reason . . . They all eat human flesh and consider it the ultimate delicacy.

Note, however, the generalization – "They all eat human flesh" – that we now know is false. Not all of Brazil's tribes were cannibals and not all followed an anthropophagic diet or customs, as the text suggests. In a large number of cases, as with the Tupis, they practiced a ritual anthropophagy (Couto 1995: 106) that had nothing to do with "delicacies." In this phrase, we would not be able to recognize the Indians that Caminha described. But the *História da Província Santa Cruz* is particularly famous for this phrase, which was reproduced in many seventeenth-century treatises. He continues:

> A lingua deste gentio toda pela Costa he huma: carece de tres letras – scilicet, não se acha nella F, nem L, nem R, cousa digna de espanto, porque assi não têm Fé, nem Lei, nem Rei; e desta maneira vivem sem Justiça e desordenadamente. (Gandavo n.d.: 49)
>
> The language of these infidels is the same all along the coast: it lacks three letters, there is no *f*, no *l* and no *r*, which is worthy of note, as this is the reason why they have no Faith, Law or King, and live without justice and without order.

Gandavo did not understand a distinctive linguistic characteristic of the Tupi and extracted from this misunderstanding moral characteristics that helped to create a diabolical image of the Indian.



FIGURE 14.1 Thédore de Bry, "The third part of America containing the remarkable history of the province of Brasil, first written in the German language by Johannes Stadius," Frankfurt, 1592.

The Survivors

Curiously – once again, intentions are always the deciding factor – this same image is much less diabolical in a document whose author had many more reasons to include such an image: Hans Staden, the survivor.

The arquebusier Hans Staden de Hesse reached Brazil under the command of Diego de Sanabria, governor of Rio de la Plata. In a skirmish, he was taken prisoner by the Tupinambas, who held him for nine months and constantly threatened to eat him. After being rescued by a French ship he returned to Europe, and his story (published in Marburg in1557) turned out to be a veritable bestseller.

In his account, we find the humiliation of the European who feels he is treated like an animal, reduced to the state of a "savage." "Deitaram-se em torno de mim, à noite, zombando e chamando-me em sua língua: 'Xe remimbaba in dé', que quer dizer: 'Tu és meu animal prisioneiro' " ("At night, they lay down all around me, mocking me and telling me in their language, 'Xe remimbaba in dé', which means 'You are

my imprisoned animal' ") (Staden 1974: 84; see also Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 73–80).

Although Staden used the word "savage" to refer to the Indians, his text was neither aggressive nor demonizing, but rather was an exceptional testimony authenticating his experience. When he comments on the absence of a government and of any other hierarchy in native society, he introduces an important idea: "conclua-se daí como quiser" ("reach your own conclusion"), he tells his readers, as Montaigne did, but without all of the Frenchman's philosophical elaboration. In the gaze of this survivor, we find relativism, the idea that cultural elements – such as the lack of private property – can be positive or negative, according to the gaze of the viewer.

> Os selvagens não têm governo, nem direito estabelecidos . . . nenhum privilégio observei entre eles, a não ser que os mais moçços devem obediência aos mais velhos, como exige o seu costume. . . . Não existe entre eles propriedade particular, nem conhecem dinheiro. (Staden 1974: 172)

> The savages have no government or established set of laws . . . I saw no privileges among them, save that it is their custom that young people be respectful of the elders . . . They have no private property nor do they have any currency.

I have examined five different types of European gazes that interpret and construct the Brazilian Indians. More could be listed if we included the scientific expeditions of the eighteenth century and those of the Romantic nativists. Furthermore, in each of these sections we could add other names and other citations, but we would always return to the same issue: the creation of a "universal Indian," an essentialist concept that writers call by different names, ranging from Caminha's term, "fledglings in Paradise," to Gandavo's "vultures that eat human flesh." In none of these narratives (save in that of Staden, the only observer who had a genuine individual contact with the Indians) is the Indian an individual, nor does he or she have a proper name, nor is his or her voice heard. In the various European gazes, Indians were little more than the incarnation of the observers' imaginaries: on the one hand, the dreams of a belief in the goodness of nature, and on the other, their immense hunger for gold and their fear of the difference of the "Other."

Note

Translated by Maria de los Angeles Falcon, Susan Castillo, and Ivy Schweitzer.

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15
New World Ethnography, the Caribbean, and Behn's *Oroonoko*

Derek Hughes

The Texts

On their migration to Mexico in the thirteenth century, the Aztecs paused in Culhuacan, whose king at first tried to destroy them. He came to realize their power, however, and sought alliance with them, whereupon his new allies requested his daughter to be their queen, and the mother of their god. The daughter was delivered and sacrificially flayed, her skin being draped over a young man, in impersonation of the goddess. Expecting a real wedding, the king entered the dark chapel with an entourage and rich gifts. By the light of the burning incense, he caught sight of his daughter's hair in its dreadfully transformed setting, and rushed out screaming.

It is a tale worthy of Poe. Like many other details of Mesoamerican sacrifices, it was available to writers of Shakespeare's generation, in Edward Grimstone's 1604 translation of José de Acosta's widely cited *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* (1590) (Acosta 1604: 508–11, following Durán 1964: 26–7). In the Restoration, it was (less hauntingly) retold in John Ogilby's *America* (1671: 297). Yet, despite the period's widespread fascination with ritual dismemberment, both in judicial punishment and in literature (witness *Titus Andronicus* and *Oroonoko*), narratives such as Acosta's made no impact on drama or fiction. The sacrifice of god impersonators remained an exotic curiosity of ethnographers until Sir James Frazer's *Golden Bough* (1890-1936) suggested a deep psychological and cultural unity between such practices and the central event of Christian culture: the self-sacrifice and resurrection of the Son of God. While retaining its unearthly strangeness, the exotically barbarous at that point became utterly fused with the sacred and familiar.

Reports about Native American culture were, nevertheless, used in seventeenth-century literature, especially by Aphra Behn in *Oroonoko* (1688). Indeed, the dependence of culture upon the mutilation of the body is one of the major subjects of the book. It is therefore all the more necessary, however, for the mutilations practiced by

one culture to bear some relationship to those practiced by others; to this end, Behn freely altered what she found.

Oroonoko is the tragedy of an African prince and his wife Imoinda, who are reunited in what until 1667 was the British colony of Surinam, having been separately sold into slavery there: Oroonoko had been kidnapped by a treacherous English slaver, while Imoinda had been sold by the hero's jealous grandfather, who had wanted her for himself. Oroonoko's captors rename him Caesar. They initially try to pacify him by good treatment, and he performs some services for them, including taking a prominent part in their dealings with the Native Americans. After leading an unsuccessful rebellion, however, and being induced to surrender by a false offer of pardon, he is savagely whipped, kills his wife to avoid her violation and the enslavement of the child she carrying, and is then executed by dismemberment.

The Caribbean and South America impressed the English literary imagination some decades before North America did. The first work to be set in continental North America is Aphra Behn's *The History of Bacon in Virginia; or, The Widdow Ranter*, performed a few months after Behn's death in 1689 (the year after the publication of *Oroonoko*). Cromwell's largely unsuccessful Caribbean campaign of 1654–5 had, however, caused a minor wave of literary imperialism, which included Davenant's two musical entertainments, *The History of Sir Francis Drake* and *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru* (1658), and whose influence persisted in the 1660s: in, for example, Dryden's portrayal of the conquest of Mexico, *The Indian Emperour* (1665), and the vision of world empires in *Paradise Lost* (1667), which culminates in the plundered realms of Mexico and Peru, and the as yet unplundered realm of Surinam (11.405–10). "The English Empire in America," to use Nathaniel Crouch's phrase (Crouch 1685), linked the Caribbean and Atlantic colonies in a single unity, which Europeans termed "English America." Indeed, Crouch even used the term "West Indies" to refer to the entire Empire, up to Newfoundland. From the standpoint of 1688, the normal subject for creative writing about America was the Caribbean. It was in writing about Virginia in *The Widdow Ranter* that Behn broke new ground.

Surinam was ceded to the Dutch in 1667, in return for New York, and its imminent loss overshadows the story. Yet, along with Behn's other late portrayal of colonial life, *The Widdow Ranter*, it represents the first major fictional representation by a British author of life in a mainland American colony, and it partly reflects Behn's own experiences in Surinam in the early 1660s. It also, however, draws on ethnographic and other sources. Her freedom and radical selectiveness with these provide a valuable record of her own very personal and original engagement with alien cultures: her reimagining of Native American culture as a commentary upon her own, and her interaction with the opposing constructions of Catholic writers, to suit her own secular interest in societies molded, not by faith, but by economic laws.

For example, several sources relate the fraudulent cures practiced by Native American priests. The Dominican Jean-Baptiste du Tertre (1610–87) describes how

the priests pretend to draw objects from the bodies of sick patients, and explicitly sees such deceptions as inspired by the devil:

> [Ils] s'approchent du malade, tasten, pressent, & manient plusieurs fois la partie affligée, souflant souiours dessus; & en tirent quelquefois, our font semblant d'en tirer des épines de Palmiste longues comme les doigts, de petits os, des dents de serpent & des éclats de bois, persuadant au malade que c'est ce qui luy causoit la douleur... ainsi le pauure malade demeure guery plus par imagination qu'en effet, & plus enchanté que disabuse. (Du Tertre 1667–71 II: 368)
>
> [They] approach the patient, feel, press, and handle the afflicted part, constantly blowing on it, and sometimes pull out (or seem to pull out) palm thorns as long as a finger, little bones, snake teeth, and splinters of wood, persuading the patient that they have caused the pain... Thus the poor patient is cured more by imagination than in reality, and is enchanted rather than freed from illusion.

Behn's account of these deceptions follows Du Tertre's, though she avoids his moralizing, describing

> all the Legerdemain Tricks, and Slight of Hand, whereby he imposes upon the Rabble; and is both a Doctor in Physick and Divinity. And by these Tricks makes the Sick believe he sometimes eases their Pains; by drawing from the afflicted part little Serpents, or odd Flies, or Worms, or any Strange thing; and though they have besides undoubted good Remedies, for almost all their Diseases, they cure the Patient more by Fancy than by Medicines, and make themselves Fear'd, Lov'd, and Reverenc'd. (Behn 1992–6 III: 102)

For Behn, this is not diabolism but beneficent deception. The priests are not, as they are for Du Tertre, sinister contraries of their Christian counterparts. Rather, they are their companions in fraud, providing satiric parallels to the deceptions on which Christianity itself is founded. In 1688, the year of *Oroonoko*, Behn had translated Fontenelle's *L'Histoire des oracles* (1687) as *The History of Oracles, and the Cheats of the Pagan Priests*, which implicitly uses the absurdity of pagan practices to suggest that of Christianity itself. She and Du Tertre use the same material, but adjust it in opposite ways in conformity with their own opposing cultural outlooks. What Behn emphasizes – characteristically – is the centrality of the body to culture: the foundation of priestly authority is the ritual management of the body. In this case the religious practices of alien peoples speak directly to Behn's own concerns.

One of the most frequently documented aspects of Native American culture was that the Caribs lacked a system of abstract number. It was often noted that they could count no further than the number of their digits, if indeed they could count as far as that: their capacities for enumeration were entirely bound up with the structure of their bodies. This detail is mentioned in George Warren's *Impartial Description of Surinam* (1667), with which Behn was certainly familiar:

> For their Numbers exceed not twenty, which they want Names for too, but express them by their Fingers and Toes, which they will sometimes double, and treble, but their Arithmetick is quickly at a loss, and then they Cry out *Ounsa awara* that is, like the Hair of ones Head, innumerable. (Warren 1667: 26)

Carib innumeracy is mentioned time and time again: by Antoine Biet (1664: 616), Charles de Rochefort (1658: 73), the Sieur de la Borde (1684: 6), John Ogilby (1671: 357, 616), and John Locke, who uses it to illustrate the dependence of numerical concepts on numerical vocabulary (Locke owned a copy of *Oroonoko*) (Locke 1979: 207). In *Robinson Crusoe* Friday cannot count to 20 in English, and has to use pebbles (Defoe 1972: 215). To a seventeenth-century mind, living amid the birth of political economy and an increasing appreciation of the mathematical order of the universe, what fascinated was not the flayed god-impersonators that were to fascinate Frazer; what fascinated was the numerical otherness of the Carib and the Carib body.

By comparison, the sophisticated mathematical accomplishments of the Mexican civilizations aroused little interest. Information about Mayan calendars, time-cycles, and their vigesimal system of counting was available in England in the translations of Acosta and the account of the conquest of Mexico by Cortés' chaplain, Francisco López de Gómara. Acosta (1604: 435) notes that the Aztecs had a symbol for zero (the absence of such a symbol from Roman numerals gravely impeded Western mathematics until the introduction of Arabic numerals). In 1643, Roger Williams praised the wonderful mathematical skills of the North American Indians (1973: 110-13). Yet such reports made little general impact, and even the Elizabethan English translator of Gómara downgrades the mathematical intelligence that is praised in his original. In describing the calendar, for example, he observes, condescendingly: "yet these simple *Indians* wente neare the marke" (López de Gómara 1940: 371). This is typical of the way in which he widens the distance between European and Native American cultures: there is no equivalent to "simple" in the original, which reads: "yet they too much attained the truth, and agreed with the rest of nations" ("empero demasiado atinaban a lo cierto, y coincidían con las demás naciones") (López de Gómara 1954 II: 368). When, in *America*, Ogilby informed his Restoration readers about the Aztec calendars, he omitted all appreciation of their intricacy and exactness (1671: 357, 616, 279), yet he twice documented the Caribs' innumeracy. When Dryden portrayed the conquest of Mexico in his tragedy *The Indian Emperour* (1665), he reduced the Aztecs' recorded capacity for symbolic representation, portraying a civilization that was not only (accurately) without measures of distance, or the subdivisions of the day, but also lacking in economic infrastructure and even in the capacity for metaphor. That is, his portrayal of the Aztecs was influenced by seventeenth-century descriptions of the Caribs.

In portraying the inhabitants of Surinam, Behn was dealing with a native people already reported to be mathematically backward. Nevertheless, she does make significant alterations in what she found, strengthening the inseparability of number

from its physical expression. At one point, the narrator and her companions meet some Native Americans, who "showed us a long cotton string, with several knots on it, and told us they had been coming from the mountains so many moons as there were knots." Biet (1664: 363, 397) and Rochefort (1666: 274) describe the use of knots, though in a reverse fashion: for example, 20 days before an event, 20 knots would be tied in a cord; one would be untied with the passing of each day. This suggests a conception of number that is independent of its material manifestation in the knots. Behn's version is more suggestive of a culture without any capacity for abstract number: the numbers exist only in the knots, and there is no word or idea for them; they are entirely material.

Behn also alludes to the Caribs' ability to imagine large numbers. On encountering for the first time the elaborately clothed bodies of Europeans, some Indian villagers exclaim:

> *Tepeeme*; taking their Hair up in their Hands, and spreading it wide to those they call'd out too, as if they would say (as indeed it signify'd) *Numberless Wonders*, or not to be recounted, no more than to number the Hair of their Heads. (Behn 1992–6 III: 101)

This is clearly inspired by the phenomenon described by Warren, though it is marginally closer to Ogilby's retelling of the information: "all that exceeds Twenty, they compare to the Hairs of their Head, crying *Ounsa awara*" (Ogilby 1671: 616). In addition, Behn's use of *Tepeeme* rather than *Ounsa awara* shows that she is thinking of the account of Antoine Biet, who has the word *tapoüimé* (1664: 396), and who mentions the actual spreading of the hair:

> Quand ils veulent representer vn nombre fort grand, & qu'ils ne peuuent compter, en disant ce mot *tapoüimé*, ils monstrent les cheueux de la teste.
>
> When they wish to represent a very big number, to which they cannot count, they say this word *tapoüimé*, and show the hair of their head.

Behn's description of the Caribs' amazement, derived from at least three accounts of their restricted numeracy, is thus one of the most richly sourced in the novel.

Yet Behn is *not* at this point describing the inhabitants' arithmetic, but their powers of narrative. She is describing a failure to *re*count ("not to be recounted") rather than a failure to count. The episode of the knotted cords shows her interest in Surinam arithmetic, and its lack of abstract numerical systems. Here, however, she transforms her sources' description of numerical failure into one of narrative failure. She does this because the relationship between numerical and linguistic systems is a fundamental element of the novel, and in its comparison of European and non-European cultures. In a wider sense than that of mere numeracy, Behn portrays Native American culture as one of the body, without the power of symbolic abstraction.

Behn's concern with the relationship between the body and symbolic systems affects her treatment of the topic with which this essay started: dismemberment. When Carib warriors compete for supreme command of the army, they are asked:

> What they dare do, to shew they are worthy to lead an Army? When he, who is first ask'd, making no Reply, Cuts off his Nose, and throws it contemptably on the Ground; and the other does something to himself that he thinks surpasses him, and perhaps deprives himself of Lips and an Eye: so they Slash on till one gives out, and many have dy'd in this Debate. (Behn 1992–6 III: 103).

Behn may or may not have known sacrificial rituals such as that described by Acosta. She would, however, almost certainly have known of the painful initiation rituals (such as flogging) undergone by Native American military commanders (Acosta 1664: 376), but these bear no resemblance to the ritual she actually describes. It, however, has some resemblance to a ritual from another part of the world, which was to be described by Frazer in *The Golden Bough*, and which concerns the cyclic immolation of a god-king. At the end of a 12-year reign, the King of Quilacare (in India) would immolate himself:

> before all the people he takes some very sharp knives, and begins to cut off his nose, and then his ears, and his lips, and all his members, and as much flesh off himself as he can; and he throws it away very hurriedly until so much of his blood is spilled that he begins to faint, and then he cuts his throat himself. (Barbosa 1866: 172; Frazer: 1994: 246)

This account, by the Portuguese traveler Duarte Barbosa, was first published in Italian translation in the second volume of Giovanni Battista Ramusio's popular and often reprinted *Navigationi et Viaggi* (1550 II: 667–8). Even if Behn had heard of it, however (and it seems unlikely), the differences from her account are as striking as the similarities. Barbosa's account is of a renewal of nature through the death of the king, before age can enfeeble him; it is akin to the Aztec flaying rituals, which Frazer describes at some length in part six of *The Golden Bough* (1980 Pt. 6: 275–305).

Behn's invented ritual is quite different in its significance, and it furthers her interest in the numerical interpretation of the body. The bodies of the competing warriors are economic units: bank accounts consisting of different units – noses, lips, etc. – which can be spent. Like the Indians' knotted cords and uncountable hairs, these severed members bespeak a society whose categories of thought are limited to the concreteness of the body. In the game of bodily strip-poker, a severed nose is a severed nose: it is not a sign; unlike a coin, it cannot represent anything else. Yet again, the body is the only point of reference. And, in order to make it so, Behn replaces known rituals with a fiction of her own.

The practices of Behn's fictitious warriors nevertheless find an all too credible counterpart in the Europeans' punishment of Oroonoko after his rebellion:

> And the Executioner came, and first cut off his Members, and threw them into the Fire; after that, with an ill-favoured Knife, they cut his Ears, and his Nose, and burn'd them; he still smoak'd on, as if nothing had touch'd him; then they hacked off one of his Arms, and still he bore up, and held his Pipe; but at the cutting of this other Arm, his Head Sunk, and his Pipe drop'd, and he gave up the Ghost, without a Groan or a Reproach. (Behn 1992–6 III: 118)

The ceremony of the chieftains is not only invented by Behn to express and explore European concerns about the economic management and definition of the body; it is also invented as analogue to European practices. Behn transposes familiar forms of violence into the sphere of the exotic and alien, and thus suspends the distinction between civilization and savagery. Indeed, while the word *barbarous* is used to describe the cultural unfamiliarity of African names and music, it is used in its moral sense only of the British. Banister, the "wild *Irish* Man" who arranges Oroonoko's execution, is "a Fellow of absolute Barbarity" (ibid: 118).

How does one handle symmetries between one's own culture and one which seems quite alien? Todorov's formulation – either one sees the Native Americans as "equals but also as identical" or else as different but inferior – has its uses, but is a blunt instrument for examining the disturbing, flickering metamorphoses of otherness into likeness, or the complexities which arise when one culture observes another culture observing another culture. If the likeness between the flayed daughter and the crucified Son went unnoticed, writers such as Diego Durán nevertheless noted parallels between the Aztec and Christian religions, interpreting them as distorted memories of revealed truth. Yet Durán also feared that the parody might infiltrate and take over the reality. Pointing out that old practices were surviving within the guise of Christian observances, he wrote: "I have heard chants in honor of God and of the saint during the festivities, mixed with ancient metaphors which only the devil, their teacher, understands" (Durán 1971: 409).

During his advance through Mexico, Cortés purified sacrificial sites by erecting crosses and images of the Virgin, replacing falsity with its opposing truth. Others, however, could create more sinister symmetries between the opposing cultures, or even dissolve their boundaries: another sacrificial site became the site of a town gallows; gladiatorial contests of black slaves were possibly held on the Aztec sacrificial stones; and Las Casas relates that 13 chieftains were executed at one time, in parodic imitation of Christ and the apostles. In an ethnographically very interesting work, *The English-American* (1648), the English Dominican turned Puritan Thomas Gage revealed that venal priests in Mexico were making money by degrading Christianity into equality with native religions. The Indians, for example, believed that their souls could be transferred into animals or inanimate objects (see Frazer 1994: 750–84). Selling them saints' images, the priests told the purchaser that the image was his external soul. Normally, the image remained in the church, but if the owner defaulted on his tithes the "soul" was banished outside (Gage 1648: 148–9).

In a spirit of cultural relativism closer to Behn's (and Frazer's), the French Huguenot Charles de Rochefort suggested that some Native American customs were fundamentally identical to some recorded in the Bible, though he did not go nearly so far as to equate Aztec and Christian sacrifice. For example, commenting on one custom of dismemberment (of presenting the head of an enemy to the king in order to gain permission to marry), he writes: "And who knows not that King *Saul* demanded of *David* the lives of an hundred *Philistines*, for the dower of his Daughter, before he gave her him in Marriage?"; "lives" is a euphemism for "foreskins" (Rochefort 1666: 334; 1 Samuel 18: 25). Biblical heroes mutilate people, too.

The gallows on the sacrificial site, the possible combats on the sacrificial stones, and the parodic last supper of the chieftains' execution suggest a fascination or identification with the violence of the conquered culture, and especially with its rites of sacrifice. It is noteworthy that, when Behn in *Oroonoko* equates European and exotic violence, she too evokes the idea of human sacrifice. After Oroonoko has led an unsuccessful slave revolt, and been savagely whipped, he kills and mutilates his pregnant wife Imoinda, fearing that she might be raped and their child enslaved:

> The Lovely, Young, and Ador'd Victim lays her self down, before the Sacrificer; while he, with a Hand resolv'd, and a Heart breaking within, gave the Fatal Stroke, first, cutting her Throat, and then severing her, yet Smiling, Face from that Delicate Body. (Behn 1992–6 III: 114)

The killing of Imoinda certainly reveals Behn's frequently dark view of male sexuality, yet it is nevertheless the least appalling of the three human dismemberments in the novel. Whatever its residual horror, moreover, it is something to which Oroonoko has been impelled by the fear of his own Other, the Europeans. It is a reduced and humanized version of their senseless and extreme violence, and in its tragic agony it contrasts significantly with the kinds of marital violence among slaves reported by the failed sugar planter Richard Ligon in 1657:

> Jealous they are of their Wives, and hold it for a great injury and scorn, if another man make the least courtship to his Wife. And if any of their Wives have two Children at a birth, they conclude her false to his Bed, and so no more adoe but hang her. (Ligon 1657: 47)

He relates a case in which no arguments would dissuade the father of twins from wife-murder. Only the threat of execution "wrought more with him, then all the reasons of Philosophy that could be given him" (ibid: 47).

The violence that in Ligon is intrinsic to African *mores* – a misguided cultural response to the natural phenomenon of twins – is here an atrocity imposed by white culture; an atrocity which Oroonoko and the narrator agree in terming a sacrifice. In addition, Oroonoko applies this same idea of sacrifice to the English treatment of him. After his whipping on the orders of the deputy governor, Byam, he prophetically

remarks: "It had been well for him if he had Sacrific'd me instead of giving me the contemptable Whip." It would be too simple to say that *Behn* is describing the execution of Oroonoko as a human sacrifice. This is a novel of many interwoven voices, and it is significant enough that the term "sacrifice" should represent the judgment of the black African on European practices; the African who, in inciting his fellow slaves to rebellion, had described his white masters as "a degenerate Race," "below the Wildest Salvages" (Behn 1992–6 III: 105).

In his account of his escape from Mexico, Thomas Gage records an encounter with an ingenuously pompous Spanish gentleman:

> *Don Melchor de Velasco*, one day fell into discourse with mee concerning *England*, and our *English* nation, and in the best, most serious and judicious part of his Don-like conference, asked me whether the sun and moone in *England* were of the same colour as in *Chiapa*, and whether *English* men went barefoot like the *Indians*, and sacrificed one another as formerly did the Heathens of that Countrey? . . . And whether the women in *England* went as long with child, as did the *Spanish* women? And lastly, whether the *Spanish* nation were not a farre gallanter nation then the *English*? (Gage 1648: 99)

Do the English perform human sacrifice? *Oroonoko* poses the same question; the answer of the African outsider is "Yes."

As Gage's anecdote shows, otherness is a moving target. For Velasco, the known otherness of the Native American is a way of understanding the more unknown British; for the Spanish priests described by Gage, it is something to which their own religion can be bent. In his very early account of the Spanish conquest of the New World, the Italian historian Pedro Mártir (Peter Martyr) describes the Christian conquest of benighted Native American cultures; but in the marginal comments of his sternly Protestant English translator, the oppositions between Catholic truth and pagan illusion sometimes mutate into similarity: "a notable lie of a papisticall heretike"; "One superstitious religion turned into another, holdeth still many thinges of the first"; "A ceremony (of besprinkling their priestes) much like the Popish holy water" (Martyr 1612: 79, 252).

Yet no early writer more captures the utter perceptual fluidity of the relationship between Europe and the primitive than Aphra Behn in *Oroonoko*, where she too portrays the intersecting viewpoints of three different cultures: African, British, and American. In one memorable moment, the English and Oroonoko venture up river to visit the Native Americans. The Indians, we have already been told, go all but naked. The Europeans are elaborately clad:

> I had a Taffaty cap, with Black Feathers, on my Head; my Brother was in a Stuff Sute, with Silver Loops and Buttons, and abundance of Green Ribon. (Behn 1992–6 III: 100–1)

Nature meets culture. Each side stares at the other in amazement, equally strange, each viewed by the reader in relation to the other side's sense of normality. It is

this – the sight of clothes – which moves the Indians to their memorable cry of "*Numberless Wonders*." Bewildered, they touch and explore the bodies and garments of their visitors, "admiring our shoes and stockings, but more our garters." From the otherness of foot-and leg-wear, the narrative moves swiftly to the complementary otherness offered by the Indians: the incomplete bodies of the mutilated chieftains. The ending of the novel is to confirm that savage mutilation is not, after all, completely alien to European practice, and it is therefore appropriate that the sense of strangeness is here conveyed through Oroonoko's eyes rather than those of the English: it is "a sort of Courage too Brutal to be applauded by our Black Hero" (ibid: 103).

Culture and History

If Behn works within, and against, a variety of ways of correlating Old and New World cultures, she also addresses a different but complementary kind of pattern for organizing a historical narrative: the quasi-Plutarchan parallel with events from classical history, which sometimes involves adding a third parallel to those already created by Plutarch. For example, Peter Martyr claims that, in allying himself with the Aztecs' enemies, Cortés parallels Caesar, who allied himself to the Gauls against the German ruler Ariovistus; and that, in defeating his enemies with a small number of troops, Cortés recalls both Caesar's defeat of Ariovistus and the Greeks' defeat of the Persian king Xerxes (Martyr 1612: 174^{v}–175^{r}). Cultures observe cultures observing cultures; and, simultaneously, the past observes the past observing the past.

The historical parallel was, of course, a standard technique in the literary culture in which Behn worked. Dryden and others repeatedly used it for literary comment on politics. Perhaps most famously, *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681) uses the biblical Absalom's rebellion against his father David as an allusive way of portraying the attempts of Charles II's illegitimate son, the duke of Monmouth, to wrest the succession to the throne from his uncle, the future James II. Shortly afterwards, in the tragedy *The Duke of Guise*, written in collaboration with Nathaniel Lee, he used religious conflict in sixteenth-century France to comment on the same political crisis: "Our *Play's a Parallel*," the Prologue declares (Dryden 1955–2002 XIV: 210). In 1683, Dryden wrote in his "Life of Plutarch," which introduced a translation of Plutarch's *Lives*:

> For *Man*kind being the same in all ages, agitated by the same passions, and mov'd to action by the same interests, nothing can come to pass, but some President of the like nature has already been produc'd, so that having the causes before our eyes, we cannot easily be deceiv'd in the effects, if we have Judgment enough but to draw the parallel. (Dryden 1955-2002 XVII: 270–1)

Behn never treats history in this way. Rather, she sees the symmetries between historical periods as being as tantalizingly incomplete and unstable as those between

European and alien cultures, and clearly links the two forms of comparison. The linkage seems to reflect the sense of cultural uprootedness which gripped her as her life and the reign of James II moved almost simultaneously to their close, and which found expression in two works set in American colonies: *Oroonoko* (of course) and *The History of Bacon in Virginia* (1689), a free dramatization of Nathaniel Bacon's rebellion of 1676, more commonly known by its subtitle of *The Widdow Ranter*. Both works portray the deracinated – émigrés, slaves, the dispossessed – and both link exposure to an unfamiliar culture with a sense of historical disorientation, a deluded quest for historical roots. Their protagonists both form a self-destructive identification with figures from the past, and indeed from Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*. Both works, moreover, complement their exploration of treacherous historical parallels by juxtaposing cultures that have reached different historical stages, from the primitive to the advanced: in *Oroonoko*, the advanced European societies, which alone possess symbols for writing and calculation, the military patriarchy of the Africans, and the rudimentary village life of the Native Americans.

A dominant theme in *The Widdow Ranter* is the lost inheritance: a severance from the past. This is experienced by the lower-class British émigrés to Virginia, who invent false histories, ancestries, and lost estates for themselves, and by the Native American king Cavernio, who does not have history, but merely oral narrative that goes back three generations. Again, the issue is inheritance. Part of Cavernio's hereditary land had been captured by an Englishman, who bequeathed it to his son, the English hero of the play, Nathaniel Bacon. Cavernio, however, has reconquered what oral tradition leads him to view as *his* inheritance. The competing claims of the colonizer and the colonized are expressed in competing claims to the historical past, and here Plutarch features prominently in the European consciousness. Whereas Cavernio only knows the past from word of mouth, Bacon has studied "the Lives of the Romans and great Men," and often exclaims:

> Why cannot I Conquer the Universe as well as *Alexander*? or like another *Romulus* form a new *Rome*, and make my self Ador'd? (Behn 1992–6 VII: 1.1.114–19)

Yet even Bacon's attempt to parallel his confrontation with New World culture with the written record of classical history is complicated by orality. His reading of Plutarch is orally reported by someone else. The parallels he draws are fleeting and inconsistent, canceled by later and less glorious ones. Far from equaling Alexander or Romulus, Bacon poisons himself, like Hannibal – because he believes a false *oral* account of his defeat. He then realizes that he has killed himself in error: just like Cassius, *reports* another character. The written text constantly becomes oral in delivery and slippery in application. Transplanted to American soil, European history simply provides this rootless figure with a fragmentary set of inconsequential and self-deluding poses, leading to that characteristic Behn denouement, an anti-heroic blunder.

The ultimate portrayal of deracination is, however, *Oroonoko*. Its hero is, of course, an exiled prince, sold into slavery. The narrator (a projection of Behn) tells him the

lives[1] of the ancient Romans – presumably from Plutarch – in an attempt divert his thoughts from his condition. In the event, he concludes from Hannibal's crossing of the Alps that he is capable of leading his fellow-slaves to freedom, and consequently rebels. The narrator had used historical narrative in an attempt to control Oroonoko. She had miscalculated its effects, because she had failed to predict the parallels he would draw from the narrative. In drawing the parallels, Oroonoko also miscalculated. Both are betrayed by Plutarch.

The path from the historical past to the future is treacherous and unpredictable, and it is so in part because history is itself a variable cultural creation. Not only is it (in the novel) possessed only by Europeans: it also depends for its shape and character upon its point of origin. The narrator explains that, for her London audience, she is abbreviating a narrative that would have been told at greater length in its original setting: "History was scarce" in Surinam, but events that compelled interest there will be of no interest in Britain. The Surinam narrative, however, remained unwritten, for the colony lacked "*Historians*, that might have given [Oroonoko] his due," leaving "only a Female Pen to celebrate his Fame." Trefry, Oroonoko's owner, might have written the history, but put it off and died. (ibid: 88–9)

History is thus, like culture, relativistic. It expands or contracts to fit the available cultural space, and its perceived authority varies with the gender or status of the author. Oroonoko's most appropriate historian would have been his slave-owner, Trefry. Yet Trefry's authority is doubly problematic: not only because of the curious association between commercial ownership of Oroonoko and the right to represent him, but also because Trefry is a singularly bad interpreter. He is an unwitting and ingenuous channel of verbal falsehood, persuading Oroonoko to abandon his rebellion on the basis of assurances of pardon from the deputy governor: assurances that are promptly dishonoured. An odd choice as an ideal historian.

If the Europeans alone have history, they in equal measure have a uniquely advanced capacity for verbal falsehood. The Native Americans deceive with their bodies, as in the sleight of hand practiced by the priests, but they do not tell lies. The Africans lie in situations of danger, but they normally deceive with the bodies or the eyes. Europeans, however, lie systematically, and Oroonoko is destroyed because he consistently underestimates their mendacity, believing the lies of the captain who kidnaps him, and of the deputy governor who offers him a pardon.

In emphasizing the natural truthfulness of the Native Americans, Behn develops material familiar from Montaigne, and also attested by the Sieur de la Borde (La Borde 1684: 44): like theirs, her Indians have no word for falsehood. When the English governor fails to keep a promised appointment, they can only conclude that he is dead, since breaking one's word is inconceivable. In addition to their awe of the spoken word, they have a superstitious awe of writing, treating the written name of a kinsman of the narrator as a magical charm, which will control nature; Antoine Biet also records that the Native Americans regarded written documents with superstitious awe (Biet 1664: 362). A residual reverence for the power of language underlies Oroonoko's vulnerability to deception by Europeans.

In portraying the Native Americans' belief in the material power of language, Behn is again distinguishing their purely corporeal culture from Europe's capacity for numerical and graphic symbols. The common bond between all cultures is their manipulation and violation of the body. If European culture is distinguished by its capacity for written narrative and calculation, these are consummated in a final act of mathematical barbarity: the quartering of Oroonoko's body.

As already noted, when Behn alludes to the rudimentary state of Native American numeracy, she does not discuss it directly, as her predecessors had done; rather, she uses it as a way of disclosing a failure of narrative description. Narrative and number are, of course, often terminologically linked. In English, to *tell* means both to count and to narrate. The Greek word *logos* means *computation*, *word*, *narrative*, and much else. The related verb *legô* means both to *count* and to *recount*, a duality of reference that is exactly reproduced in the English translation, and in *Oroonoko* itself. There is the twice-mentioned "Account" (balance-sheet) of potential revenge between Oroonoko and his grandfather (Behn 1992–6 VII: 79); Behn does not witness the reunion of Oroonoko and Imoinda but receives an "Account" (narrative) from Trefry (ibid: 92). And we see both senses of the word when Behn relates both the beauties of Surinam and their economic value: "it were endless to give an Account of all" (ibid: 96; emphasis added). When Oroonoko is "counting up" the sufferings of his fellow-slaves, he is *describing* them in a "Harangue" rather than literally enumerating them (ibid: 105). And, when the Native Americans swarm out to see the European visitors, they cry out "*Numberless Wonders*, or not to be re*counted*, no more than to *number* the Hair of their Heads" (ibid: 101; second and third emphases added). In her characters' counting, accounting, and recounting, Behn does seem to be focusing on that very ancient association between numbering and narrative. Number in Oroonoko is the prime point of distinction between the bodily and the abstract. Behn mentally identifies the distinction between physical numeration and symbolic numeration with the difference between experience and history.

Oroonoko is fascinated not only by Plutarch but – earlier – by mathematical abstraction. One pretence used to convince his amorous grandfather that he has resigned Imoinda willingly to him is that he is diverting himself "with his Mathematicians" (Behn 1992–6 VII: 69). He is seduced by counting and recounting: by mathematics and narrative. The first person he meets on arriving in Surinam is the honest but credulous Cornish agent of the governor, Trefry, who was, we are told at once, "a very good Mathematician" (ibid: 107); an unsuccessful historian, however. Most significantly, when he first encounters the captain who is to betray him into slavery, the initial attraction is that he is entertained "every Day with Globes and Maps, and Mathematical Discourses and Instruments" (ibid: 82): with numbers liberated from the abacus of the body and extended to a global and indeed cosmic scale. Fascinated, Oroonoko does not realize that he is looking at the instruments of abstraction that make possible the transatlantic trade to which he falls victim. A trade which will lead to his being a commodity in the market where slaves are sold at "twenty Pound a Head" (ibid: 60). The process then leads to his "Sacrifice" (ibid: 115)

of his wife, to prevent the child from entering the cycle of the marketplace; and to the final ritual of dismemberment, in which the body reverts to being an abacus, quartered and distributed through the plantations. The narrative regresses from the generalized to the particular. Behn's laws of history are the reverse of Dryden's; instead of ever-widening circles of generalization, we move inexorably to the particular: to the fragmented, mutilated body.

Conclusion

If the use of the pen distinguishes European cultures from those of Africa and America, that of the knife unites all three. For the knife is the primary means whereby culture imposes itself on nature. Cutting can be not only destructive, but also aesthetic or economically creative. In the first use of the idea in the book, Imoinda's social quality is revealed by her "delicately *Cut*" body (ibid: 92; italics added), "carved in fine flowers and birds all over," as if "japanned." Even when Behn directly describes the perpetually blooming trees of Surinam, their flowers appear "all like Nosegays" (ibid: 95); the eternal blooms are imagined with reference to *cut* and artificially arranged flowers. Moreover, when Behn goes on to describe the wood of the blossoming trees, the dissecting mind is still more evident: the trees "have an intrinsick Value above common Timber; for they are, when *cut*, of different Colours, glorious to behold" (ibid: 95; my italics). Hannibal, whose historical example so fatally bemuses Oroonoko, "had *Cut* his Way through Mountains of solid Rocks" (ibid: 106).

The knife, at once creative and destructive, sums up the ambiguities of culture. If cutting can, seemingly, transform Imoinda's body into an inorganic artifact, it also turns her into a decaying corpse, when Oroonoko cuts her throat and then severs her head from her pregnant body. Paradoxically, the newly barren corpse (bearing "the Fruits of tend'rest Love") is then covered by the "Flowers" (ibid: 114) whose images had adorned it in life; gradually, however, in a peculiarly grim victory of culture over nature, the stench of the cut body overcomes the natural scent of the still-growing flowers.

Thus, despite her rejection of genuinely attested Native American rituals of dismemberment, Behn treats the cutting of the body as a fundamental social process. At this fundamental level, cultures and histories do parallel each other. The bodies of the Indian commanders and of Oroonoko are both mutilated; so are the bodies of Oroonoko and the historical figure after whom he is renamed, Julius Caesar. Discovered by the English after his sacrifice of Imoinda, Oroonoko "cut a piece of Flesh from his own Throat, and threw it at 'em" (ibid: 116). After the Dutch takeover, the Native Americans will attack, and "cut in pieces" (ibid: 100) some of the colonists.

Thus, amid all the surgery, artistry, and butchery, one thing in particular stands out. Societies, whether in America, Africa, or Europe, have an almost essential

tendency to dismember their leaders. The Indian commanders become leaders by self-mutilation. The African slaves who, on Oroonoko's arrival in Surinam, hail him as a king, collaborate with the English in torturing his body. Behind Oroonoko's fate lies that of two other leaders: the beheaded Charles I and, as already noted, Caesar. Although Caesar is celebrated as a great conqueror, the text against which we most appropriately set Oroonoko's death is that pious self-deception of Shakespeare's Brutus, full of the imagery of cutting:

> Our course will seem too bloody, Caius Cassius,
> To cut the head off and then hack the limbs . . .
> Let's be sacrificers, but not butchers, Caius . . .
> Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods,
> Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds.
> (Shakespeare 1955: 2.1.162–74)

If it is the knife that separates culture from nature, the knife constantly threatens to return it there: to the once exquisitely carved but now rotting corpse among the leaves and flowers. This is why Behn both gives such prominence to the carving of the body and is so creatively free with what she found in the accounts of Native American customs. She is imposing her own unity on the diverse cultures that she inventively records. For Plutarch, a republican and Platonist, the goal is rational balance, both in the individual and in the state. Behn, the pessimistic monarchist, can only contemplate societies with a seemingly inbuilt dynamic towards an opposite goal: "To cut the head off and then hack the limbs." In their dependence on the hacking of the body, cultures seem to subsist on the principles of their own destruction, and a sense of foreboding hangs over Behn's narrative. The Surinam she remembers was on the point of falling to the Dutch; it does not feature in the later seventeenth-century surveys of Britain's American "Isles and Territories" which she may have consulted. The England in which she wrote also seemed likely to fall to the Dutch (and did). And James II seemed likely to join that ominous sequence of earlier destroyed leaders, Julius Caesar, Oroonoko, and his own father, Charles I; the king whose tragedy overshadowed the political world in which Behn wrote, and whom, in dedicating Part II of *The Rover* to James, she described as having been "*sacrific'd*" (Behn 1992–6 VI: 228).[2] Did the English sacrifice one another? asked Melchor de Velasco. Certainly: they sacrificed their kings.

Notes

1 The first edition has "loves," emended in the second edition of 1688.

2 "Sacrific'd to the insatiate and cruel Villany of a seeming sanctifi'd Faction" (Dedication to Part II of *The Rover*).

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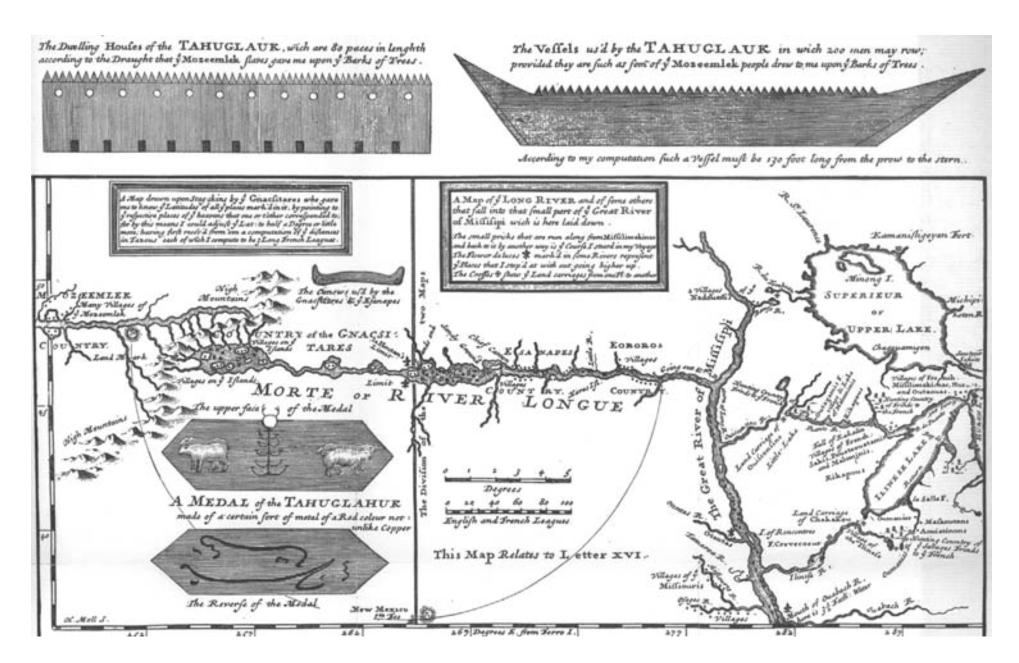
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PART THREE
Negotiating Identities



"A Map of ye Long River and of some others that fall into that small part of ye Great River of Missisipi which is here laid down" – with sketch plans of a house, a vessel, and a medal, in *New Voyages to North-America* by the Baron de Lahontan, reprinted from the English edition of 1703, edited by Reuben Gold Thwaites, vol. 1, page 254. Lahontan's framed caption reads: "A Map drawn upon Stag-skins by the Gnasitares who gave me to know the Latitudes of all ye places mark'd in it, by pointing to ye respective places of ye heavens that one or t'other corresponded to; for by this means I could adjust ye Lat: to half a Degree or little more; having first receiv'd from 'em a computation of ye distances in Tazous each of which I compute to be 3 Long French Leagues."

16
Gendered Voices from Lima and Mexico: Clarinda, Amarilis, and Sor Juana

Raquel Chang-Rodríguez

A consideration of the history and literature of colonial Spanish America usually brings to mind the daring deeds of conquistadors and their descriptions of the New World recorded in chronicles, letters, and histories. We recall the writings of Christopher Columbus and Bartolomé de las Casas; we conjure up images of Hernán Cortés and Francisco Pizarro, and their adversaries, Moctezuma and Atahualpa. Not as familiar to us are the names of Doña Marina or Malinche, the native interpreter who aided Cortés as he advanced toward the Aztec capital, or of Catalina de Erauso who, disguised as a man, fought alongside the conquistadors in Peru and fascinated many with her bold deeds.

Even less familiar to us are the names of the native and *mestizo* women who lived through the cultural clash brought about by the encounter of Europe and America in the first decades of colonization. Among these women are, first, Isabel Chimpu Ocllo, the mother of Garcilaso de la Vega, author of *Royal Commentaries* (1609, 1617); a descendant of Inca nobility, she lived with Garcilaso's father until, forced by the Crown, conquistadors were required to marry Spanish women. Second, Francisca Pizarro, the wealthy *mestiza* daughter of the conqueror of Peru who was forced to abandon her homeland and reside in Spain where she first married an uncle, Hernando Pizarro, and later an impoverished nobleman, Pedro Arias de Portocarrero. And third, Doña Beatriz Clara Coya, an Inca princess given in marriage to Martín García de Loyola as a reward for having captured her rebellious uncle, the Inca king Tupac Amaru.

As is to be expected, access to information that will allow historians, anthropologists, and literary scholars to construct an accurate picture of the lives and thoughts of these women has not been easy. We know that they were "given" to the Europeans with the hope of establishing alliances, to respond to their sexual desires, and to tend to their needs as domestics. In some cases we have greater information about women from the Aztec or Inca nobility associated with key figures of the conquest. This information is

gleaned from wills, letters, histories, and chronicles in which they appear in the background because of the importance of their male partners. Consequently, the biographies and thoughts of these women will always remain an intriguing question when reconstructing the history of the early decades of the colonial period.

In this essay I will focus on a different group of women. They were uncommon because they knew how to read and write and because they loved books and tried to express their thoughts and vision of the world through writing and through the printed word. These are the women who during the colonial period took up the pen and, going against the grain, left ample testimony of their ability to belong to the world of literature. And I emphasize "against the grain" because colonial women were marginalized by patriarchal society for at least three reasons: first, their gender; second, their place of birth (if born in America from Spanish descent, they were considered inferior to native Spaniards); and third, their ethnic origin (if they were *mestizas* or Native Americans, then they occupied even a lower place in the social pyramid). Despite these obstacles, women in Spanish America struggled to be heard and to write from the very early years of the colonial period onward.

In this regard, it is important to underscore that in the second part of his *Silva de poesía* (Miscellany of Poetry) (1585–95), Eugenio Salazar de Alarcón, a native of Madrid who became rector of the University of Mexico (1592–8) and member of the Royal Council of the Indies (1600–2), mentions the names of three poets from Santo Domingo. Two of these – Elvira de Mendoza (?–?) and Leonor de Ovando (?–1615?) – were women. Of the former, no work has been preserved despite the fact that Salazar dedicates a sonnet of praise to her; the latter, a nun, is considered the first woman poet in America. Even though little remains of their poetry, their participation in the literary milieu of Santo Domingo appears to point to a receptive atmosphere, at least at the beginning, for women interested in practicing literature in the New World.

Having stressed that women writers were present on the American literary scene since the very early years, I would like to link Mexico and Peru through the voice of three women writers: Clarinda, Amarilis, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1651–95). The first two are from the viceroyalty of Peru and used pseudonyms, while the third was born in Mexico, capital of the viceroyalty of Nueva España (New Spain). Clarinda is known for her only work, a composition in praise of poetry, Amarilis for a long epistle addressed to Lope de Vega (one of the most acclaimed writers of Golden Age Spain), and Sor Juana for her poems, essays, and plays, as well as for her forward-looking stance in defense of women. Before turning to study the contributions of Clarinda and Amarilis, I will review the cultural ambiance of colonial Lima in the early decades of the seventeenth century.

Literary Lima

Toward the end of the sixteenth century, Lima, capital of the viceroyalty of Peru, was an important center of culture. In this city, known and unknown writers, good and

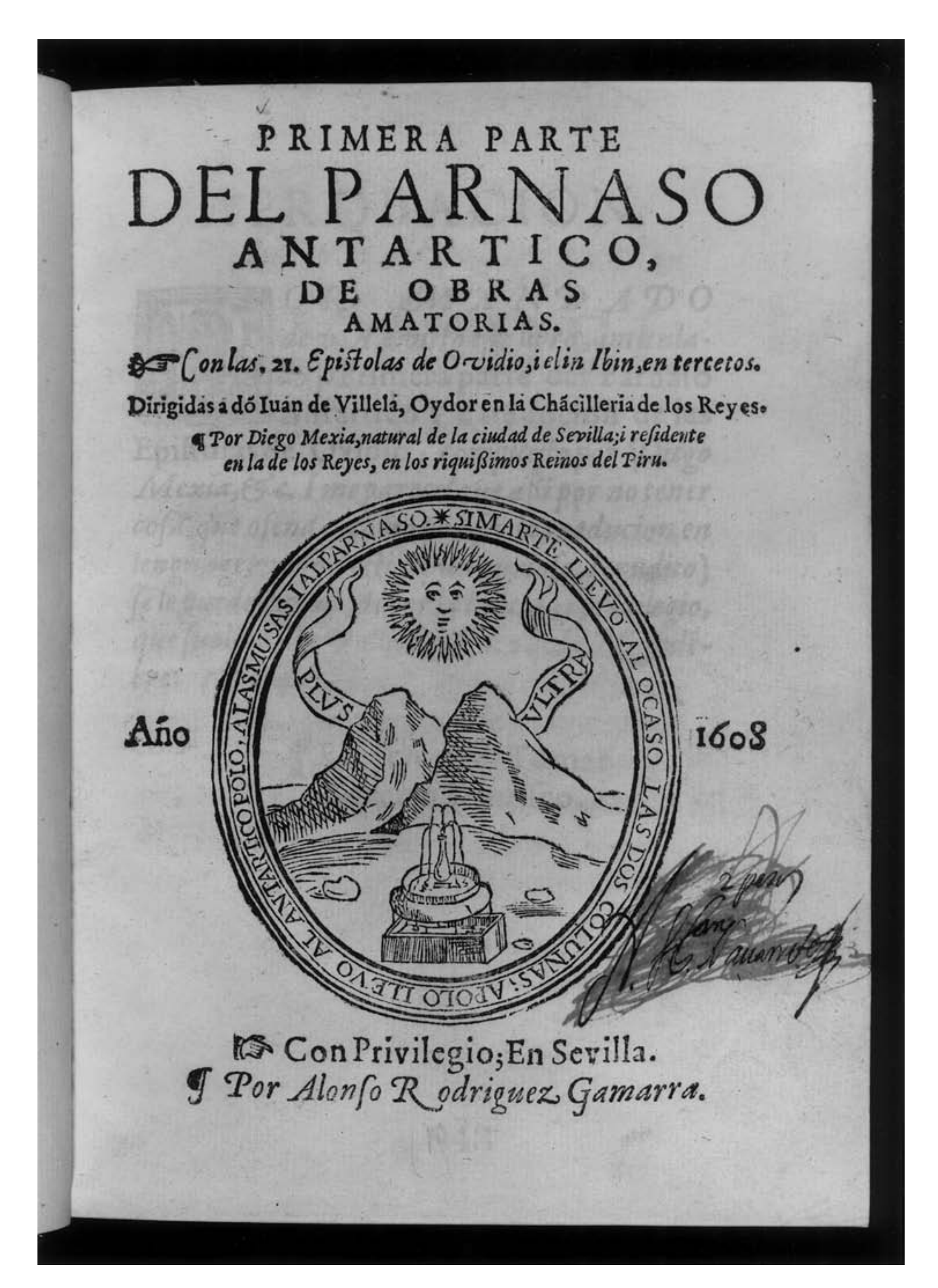
bad poets, gathered in *tertulias* to exchange ideas and discuss the latest literary trends. The Academia Antártica, a *tertulia* from the last decade of the sixteenth century and the first of the seventeenth century, as well as the literary gatherings sponsored by viceroy Juan de Mendoza y Luna, Marquis of Montesclaros (1607–15), are representative of these intellectual groups which followed very closely the popular trends in Spain. Their bards participated in poetry contests that were as fashionable in Lima and Mexico as in Madrid.

As Irving A. Leonard demonstrates in his classic *Books of the Brave* (1949) amply confirmed by recent scholarship, the predominant literary styles were brought to America by Spanish writers themselves or by books sent by shopkeepers, eager to sell their merchandise at high prices. The compliments conferred on Peruvian poets by well-known writers of the *Siglo de Oro* or Golden Age underscore the importance of literary activities in Lima. For example, Cervantes in his *Canto de Calíope* (1585) celebrates 11 poets living in the viceroyalty of Peru, while Lope de Vega in his *Laurel de Apolo* (1630) salutes 13 poets from Peru.

Clarinda and her Praise of Poetry

Among the many testimonies celebrating poetry and poets during this period, the *Discurso en loor de la poesía* (Discourse in Praise of Poetry), a prologue to the *Primera parte del Parnaso Antártico de obras amatorias* (Seville, 1608), the Spanish translation of Ovid's *Heroids* by the Sevillian poet Diego Mexía de Fernangil, has always attracted the interest of literary critics (figure 16.1). It has intrigued critics because to this date the true name of its author, who wrote under the pen name Clarinda, is unknown. We do know that Clarinda is a woman because Mexía de Fernangil, when presenting her as the author of the prologue to his translation, characterizes her as "una señora principal d'este Reino, muy ver / sada en la lengua Toscana, i Portuguesa, por cuyo / mandamiento, i por justos respetos, no se escrive / su nombre" ("a principal lady of this realm, with a mastery of the Italian and Portuguese languages; following her wish, and out of the proper respect owed to her, her name is not revealed here") (Clarinda 2000: 130).

Clarinda's *Discourse in Praise of Poetry* is a fundamental document in which the author takes into account the explanations offered by key Spanish theoreticians of the period (Marqués de Santillana, Juan de la Encina, Alonso López Pinciano) to discuss the divine origin of poetry, its importance and dignity. The writer also discusses the relationship between inspiration and technique in the arts. Written in tercets of 11 syllables, then the fashionable meter to discuss serious topics, the poem follows the pattern of traditional praises of the arts. Clarinda's *Discourse* is evidence of how fast Spanish literary fashions traveled to the New World, and the eagerness of colonial poets to imitate their Peninsular counterparts. In addition, it highlights that in the colonial capitals there were women capable of competing even with the most gifted of male poets. We do know that Clarinda was not the only woman poet in Peru because


PRIMERA PARTE
DEL PARNASO
ANTARTICO,
DE OBRAS
AMATORIAS.
Con las, 21. Epiſtolas de Ovidio, i el in Ibin, en tercetos.
Dirigidas a dō Iuan de Villela, Oydor en la Chācilleria de los Reyes.
¶ Por Diego Mexia, natural de la ciudad de Sevilla; i reſidente
en la de los Reyes, en los riquiſsimos Reinos del Piru.

Año 1608
Con Privilegio; En Sevilla.
¶ Por Alonſo Rodriguez Gamarra.

FIGURE 16.1 Title page of *Primera Parte del Parnaso antártico de obras amatorias* (1608) by Diego Mexía de Fernangil, which includes Clarinda's *Discurso en loor de la poesía*. Courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America, New York.

she asserts: "i aun yo conozco en el Piru tres damas / qu'an dado en la Poesía [h]eroicas muestras" ("In Peru I am acquainted with three ladies / who have given ample proof of their ability to write poetry") (Clarinda 2000: 144, vv. 458–9).

Since the *Discourse* follows closely other tracts celebrating the arts, one may ask why it can be considered gendered poetic discourse. I propose that one reason is that its author situates herself in a tradition of illustrious women writers. The *Discourse* includes several women in a catalogue of poets and savants composed from different sources. When introducing this catalogue the lyrical voice reasserts its gender: "Mas será bien, pues soi muger, que d'ellas /diga mi Musa, si el beni[g]no cielo / quiso con tanto bien engrandecellas" ("It will be appropriate, since I am a woman, for / my Muse to speak about women, as the kind heavens / bestowed so much good on them wishing to exalt them") (ibid: 143, vv. 421–3). Thus Clarinda's catalogue of worthy women includes heroines from biblical history (Jael, Judith, the Virgin Mary), as well as women authors from the pagan–Christian tradition (Sappho, Damophila, Pola Argentaria, Proba Valeria, the Sybils and Elpis), and the bisexual Tiresias Manto. In addition, Clarinda is very conscious of being a writer from America, particularly from the Southern part of South America then called the "región Antártica." The poetic voice calls on the Southern nymphs for inspiration: "Aquí Ninfas d'el Sur venid ligeras, / pues que soy la primera qu'os imploro, / dadme vuestro socorro las primeras" ("Come nymphs from the South, come quickly, / as I am the first to request your help, / be the first ones to aid me") (ibid: 131, vv. 22–4). She also proposes to replace Apollo, god of poetry, with Diego Mexía, the compiler of the *Parnaso Antártico*, because in Peru, in the Southern region from where Clarinda writes, he has become "Delio, el Sol, el Febo santo" ("Delius, the Sun, the holy Phoebus") (ibid: 132, vv. 43–5). By including the catalogue of illustrious women writers, the poetic voice reaffirms her contributions and those of other women before her to poetry and to history. By emphasizing the place from where she writes, Clarinda elevates Lima and the New World as places capable of producing sophisticated poetry and unmatched poets (Monguió 1983: 45–52). But Clarinda is not the only woman writer from the viceroyalty of Peru.

Amarilis and her Letter to "Belardo"

In 1621 Lope de Vega, the most celebrated playwright of the Golden Age, published *La Filomena*, a miscellany which includes the *Epístola a Belardo*, a love poem addressed to the Spanish writer by Amarilis, an anonymous lady probably born in the city of Huánuco. In this epistle written in verse form, its author includes biographical information that reveals that she is a criolla, a person born in America of Spanish ancestry. The anonymous author notes the early death of her parents and how an older aunt took care of her and a younger sister (Belisa in the epistle). Amarilis also tells us that her beauty would have made possible a good marriage; however, she preferred a celibate life.

Amarilis wrote to Lope de Vega with two objectives: she wanted to put into writing, in verse form, her feelings for the famous playwright; and she requested that he write a biography of St. Dorothy (Santa Dorotea), her patron saint. As previously indicated, in *La Filomena* Lope published the love letter by Amarilis and also his response, in which the Spanish author calls the Peruvian poet "Siren from the Equinox" and "Amarilis of the Indies," and ends his reply confessing his undying love for the mysterious lady.

Influenced by the ideas about poetry of the Italian school – the meters and themes brought to Spain by Boscán and Garcilaso, dating back to Petrarch and his followers – the *Epístola* shows how well acquainted Amarilis was with Latin poets, particularly with Virgil. But what is the novelty of this *Epístola* within Hispanic lyric tradition and from a modern feminist perspective? Contrary to established patterns in Renaissance lyric poetry, Amarilis takes the initiative: she does not hesitate to express her love for Lope through delicate metaphors. The poet takes advantage of platonic ideas to exalt her feelings and dignify herself when explaining that her impossible love can only belong to an "alma osada" ("daring soul") (Amarilis 1945: 23, v. 28), such as hers. This love goes beyond the physical and elevates itself by seeking beauty and perfection.

However, more importantly, Amarilis pens her poem fully conscious of the fact that she is a woman writing from a different world, the New World. She underlines this awareness by indicating that a man would not have dared to address such a famous author as Lope de Vega. However, "la mujer, que es fuerte, / no teme alguna vez la misma muerte" ("a strong woman is not fearful of death itself") (ibid: 35, v. 314). When characterizing her poetry as "fruta nueva" ("new fruit") (ibid: 35, v. 28), Amarilis identifies herself with America and underscores the importance of New World literary creations, as well as the literary contributions written by women. New creations, such as her *Epístola*, will attract with their novelty (they are from America), and with their difference (they are by a woman). Her poetry is the "fruta nueva"; such exotic fruit can only be tasted and appreciated by the best; and this is why she addressed her *Epístola* to Lope de Vega, the most distinguished playwright of Golden Age Spain. In this counterpoint, Amarilis' poetry proclaims its similarities to the best of the Iberian Peninsula, and reflects upon itself to affirm its American provenance. Thus, in it one can glimpse the beginnings of a process of transculturation. As we shall see, this process will become more evident in the seventeenth century, when New World writers such as Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz will attempt to create a distinct literary language reflecting another experience, circumstance, and geography.

The Tenth Muse: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

With Sor Juana we come to Mexico, capital of the viceroyalty of Nueva España. There, as in Lima, the art of literature was practiced in the vice-regal court and in the university by poets born in Spain and the Americas. Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

(1651–95) (figure 16.2), one of the most brilliant writers of the Spanish language, is among those poets. Through her *Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz* (Answer to Sister Filotea de la Cruz) (1691), a key autobiographical document in which Sor Juana defends her rights and women's rights to intellectual pursuits, we know that she was born out of wedlock, the daughter of a criolla woman and a Spanish soldier. A precocious child, she learned how to read and write at a very early age and later, at about the age of eight, Juana was sent to Mexico City to live with relatives. At that time she began to study Latin. Soon the news of the child prodigy reached the vice-regal court, and the viceroy, Sebastián de Toledo Molina y Salazar and his wife, Leonor Carreto (Marquis and Marchioness de Mancera, 1664–73) invited her to live at the palace. The young woman continued writing poetry and dedicated several poems to the vicereine, addressing her as Laura. Despite her success at court, at 18 Juana Ramírez de Asuaje (or Asbaje) decided to enter a convent (Convent of Saint Hieronymus), adopted the name of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, and initiated an intellectual dialogue with key figures of the period from Mexico and Europe. Among them was Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora (1645–1700), the Mexican geographer, mathematician, and writer who would become one of her best friends.

The new viceroy (1680–6), Antonio Manuel Lorenzo Enríquez Afán de la Ribera (Marquis of the Laguna and Count of Paredes de Nava) and his wife, María Luisa Manrique de Lara y Gonzaga (Countess of Paredes de Nava in her own right), were quickly taken by Sor Juana's wit and intelligence. The vicereine became one of the most fervent admirers of Sor Juana's poetry and often appeared in it under the name of Lisi, Fili, or Lísida. It was she who brought Sor Juana's manuscripts to Madrid and was instrumental in their publication in book form with the title *Inundación castálida* (1689). This collection was reprinted several times in different Spanish cities with the simple title *Poemas*. The second volume of Sor Juana's poetry, *Segundo volumen* or *Obras poéticas*, appeared in Seville in 1692. *Fama y obras póstumas* (Fame and Posthumous Works), the third collection, appeared in Madrid in 1700 with a biographical introduction by the Jesuit Diego Calleja. It was later published in Lisbon (1701), Barcelona (1701), and again in Madrid (1714, 1725).

Thanks to this initial effort by the Marchioness de la Laguna and Countess of Paredes de Nava, and the publication of Sor Juana's poetry, her writings circulated in Spain and America. In spite of this success, Sor Juana constantly had to defend her right to intellectual pursuits, as these were viewed as the exclusive patrimony of the male members of society. These struggles are evident in several lengthy letters she wrote, *Autodefensa espiritual* (ca. 1682), and particularly the *Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz* (The Answer to Sister Filotea de la Cruz) (1691), explaining to members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy that her desire to study did not put her salvation at risk. In the former, an unsigned document attributed to the Tenth Muse and brought to the attention of the academic world by the Mexican clergyman Aureliano Tapia Méndez, Sor Juana argues with her confessor, the Jesuit Antonio Núñez de Miranda (1618–95). This letter has revealed that Sor Juana's problems with church hierarchy were present long before she completed the *Carta Atenagórica* (1690), a response to a sermon



FIGURE 16.2 Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Engraving from *La Ilustración Española y Americana* (October 22, 1892). Courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America, New York.

preached and published several decades before in Lisbon by Antonio de Vieyra (1608–97), an acclaimed Jesuit writer from Portugal. The *Respuesta a Sor Filotea* is related to the *Carta Atenagórica*, written at the request of her friend Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz, the archbishop of Puebla (1637–99). After the publication of this document, in which Sor Juana displayed her knowledge and rhetorical skills to refute Vieyra's assertion regarding Christ's love for humankind, the ecclesiastical authorities felt it was time to assert their control over Sor Juana's writings. Even her friend and protector, the archbishop of Puebla, wrote to the Mexican nun, calling himself "Sor Filotea de la Cruz." In this letter, the archbishop urged Sor Juana to abandon intellectual pursuits and to devote herself to the salvation of her soul. Sor Juana strongly refuted these arguments in the *Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz*, a tract in defense of her rights – and women's rights – to study and to use her mind. Let us examine some aspects of this unique letter.

Respuesta a Sor Filotea de la Cruz

A fundamental autobiographical document, the *Respuesta* presents clearly and logically Sor Juana's arguments in defense of women's right to intellectual pursuits. As Rosa Perelmuter (1983) has indicated, in this carefully crafted response the Tenth Muse shows her skills when presenting her defense, following the four divisions suggested by traditional rethoric: introduction, narration, proof, and conclusion. In it Sor Juana describes her constant thirst for knowledge, recalling that, as a child, she stopped eating cheese because it made people less clever ("hacía rudos," "entorpecía") and she clipped her hair if she did not learn opportunely. Sor Juana mentions her early desire to attend the University of Mexico dressed as a man, since women were not allowed to attend universities. She also explains that, as a novice in the convent, when a mother superior forbade her to study from books and to use scientific instruments, she began to analyze natural phenomena, from the circles spun by a top, to how eggs cooked in oil. This led Sor Juana to comment: "Si Aristóteles hubiera guisado, mucho más hubiera escrito" ("If Aristotle had known how to cook, he would have written even more") (De la Cruz 1957, IV: 460).

In the *Respuesta* Sor Juana also refutes her critics, citing, like Clarinda, a catalogue of learned women from classical antiquity, and sacred and secular history. She argues persuasively that God gave her the desire to learn and the ability to use her mind. In my view, this assertion is the central point in the document: as the ability to reason is a gift from God to humankind (men *and* women), it should be put to good use by men and women alike. Its logical corollary is that those who criticize Sor Juana for her intellectual pursuits are wrong. Her desire to learn has a divine origin.

However, shortly after finishing the letter to "Sor Filotea" (Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz), the Mexican nun, even though she continued to write, gave away her library and scientific instruments. Does this change represent the triumph of the church over her intellectual vocation? Literary critics as well as historians continue to

search for documentary evidence in order to respond to the many unanswered questions presented by Sor Juana's biography. The "Tenth Muse," as her contemporaries used to call her, died in Mexico in 1695, as the result of an epidemic. As indicated by the *Respuesta*, the constant preoccupations of Sor Juana's life were her love of learning and her conviction of the right of women to study.

In addition to literature itself, Sor Juana had many interests: music, theology, philosophy. Music, for example, occupied an important place in her intellectual pursuits. It has been confirmed that she was familiar with a famous seventeenth-century tract of musical theory *El melopeo y maestro* (Music and Master) (1613) by Pietro Cerone. From some of her poems, we know that the author began to write a manual of musical theory that has not been found to date. Sor Juana called it "El caracol" or "The Snail Shell" because she viewed Harmony as a spiral line, twisted on itself. Even though she did not compose the music for the *villancicos* or carol sequences that she wrote, while at the convent the writer taught singing, and participated in the many church rituals involving music.

In her writings Sor Juana cultivated several genres: poetry, essay, drama. Her most admired models were the masters of the Spanish baroque (Calderón, Quevedo, Góngora). However, her literary contributions are no simple copy of European models. I believe that Sor Juana's writings are different and new – "fruta nueva," like Amarilis' *Epístola* – because, as we shall see, their profound intellectual thrust enriches and recreates tradition. When discussing the Mexican nun's contributions, I will attempt to offer an overview as to how the singularity of her lyric voice is evidenced in the carol sequences or *villancicos*, a secular drama, and selected poems.

Villancicos

Prominent among Sor Juana's writings are the carol cycles or sets of carols sung in the cathedrals of Mexico and Puebla to celebrate religious festivities. She wrote a total of 12 sets of carols between 1676 and 1691; their importance has been acknowledged in recent studies dedicated to the carol cycles (Tenorio 1999). Some of her *villancicos* voiced popular concerns from the heterogeneous groups (native, *mestizo*, African, Afro-Mexican) that lived in the viceroyalty of Nueva España. In turn, these concerns with cultures other than the Iberian culture gave the *villancicos* the exotic note with which baroque writers sought to distinguish their works. I underline this aspect of Sor Juana's writings because in the carol sequences she often represents individuals from marginalized ethnic groups. In so doing, she gives voice to feelings that questioned the role of the colonial establishment: the slave's desire for freedom, the secondary position of the *mestizo*, the unequal distribution of wealth and work, and the place of women in that society. Sor Juana does so mainly through music, plays on words, puns, and very powerful rhetoric skills. The series of carol sequences devoted to St. Catherine of Alexandria (Santa Catarina de Alejandría) (1691) shows how Sor Juana uses the life of the young martyr to present her own concerns. The Mexican nun underscores that

Catherine's "ciencia divina" ("divine science") allows her to triumph over the savants of Alexandria. The young woman's intellect balances divine and rational knowledge, and this combination allows her to defeat the "arrogancia profana" ("profane arrogance") of the male savants who question her. The lyrical voice states: "De una Mujer se convencen / todos los Sabios de Egipto, / para prueba de que el sexo / no es esencia en lo entendido" ("A Woman convinces / all the wise men of Egypt, / to prove that gender / has nothing to do with intelligence") (De la Cruz 1952, II: 171, vv. 9–12). However, it goes beyond this assertion to underscore men's arrogance: "no estuvo el prodigio / en vencerlos, sino en que / ellos se den por vencidos" ("the amazing deed / was not to defeat them / but rather in making them aware of their defeat") (ibid: vv. 15–17). When praising Catherine's deeds, the poetic voice also underscores that women must help the church through the use of their intellectual gifts because "no la quiere ignorante / El que racional la hizo" ("He who made her rational / . . . does not want her ignorant") (ibid: vv. 36–7). Thus, to study and to learn are not activities undertaken for simple personal satisfaction, risking salvation: God has made woman rational and wants her to use her talents to glorify him and his church.

Secular plays: *Los empeños de una casa*

Sor Juana wrote religious and secular plays performed during important occasions in the vice-regal palace and in the houses of noblemen. As critics have pointed out (Sabat de Rivers 1989, 1998; Luciani 2004; Merrim 1991, 1999; Johnson 1993), among her secular plays, *Los empeños de una casa* (The Trials of a House) (1683) offers some interesting departures from European models: the decision-making power of two female protagonists, Doña Leonor and Doña Ana, guides the action of the comedia; Carlos, the "galán" or male protagonist, trusts his loved one and is not guided by outward appearances; disguised as a woman, the "gracioso" subverts the tradition of the comedia in which female characters, generally, dress as men to resolve issues related to the honor code. Sor Juana's metatheatrical innovation is more revealing. Castaño, the comic character, a Mexican *mestizo*, changes clothes on stage to appear disguised as a woman. He pretends to be Doña Leonor, the beautiful protagonist, but he appears as a ridiculous figure. The punchline arrives when the "gracioso," disguised as the leading lady, captivates Don Pedro, one of her suitors, and pokes fun at men in general for being so foolish as to follow anything that resembles a woman in their desire to make a love conquest:

> Ya estoy armado, y ¿quién duda
> que en el punto que vean
> me sigan cuatro mil lindos
> de aquestos que galantean
> a salga lo que saliere,

y que a bulto se amartelan
no de la belleza que es,
sino de la que ellos piensan?
(De la Cruz 1957, III:138, vv. 387–94)

Now I am all ready, and no doubt
as soon as they see me
Four thousand sexy men will follow me,
Those men who woo
To find out what will happen,
Who fall in love with shapes,
Not of a real beauty,
But of the beauty they imagine?

However, Sor Juana is even-handed in her criticism. Through the "gracioso," we know why some women behave foolishly: men beseech them all the time!

Lyric Poetry

In her poetry Sor Juana continues to explore the relationship between the sexes in a voice which is sometimes female, sometimes male, or of an undetermined gender. For example, in her love poems, as Amarilis did before her in the *Epístola* to Lope in a more discreet fashion, the female, as Sabat de Rivers has indicated, takes the initiative. The poetic voice, rationalizing the predicament, prefers to give herself to the lover who loves her: "Pero yo, por mejor partido, escojo / de quien no quiero, ser violento empleo, / que, de quien no me quiere, vil despojo" ("But I, as the better alternative, choose / To serve him whom I don't love, against my will / Rather than be, of him who doesn't love me, / the despised victim") (De la Cruz 1951, I: 289). In some sonnets, when the loved one is absent, the poetic voice is able to capture him through the power of imagination, showing the intellectual bent of Sor Juana's lyrics: "poco importa burlar brazos y pecho / si te labra prisión mi fantasía" ("It matters not that you escape my arms / If you are imprisoned within my imagination") (ibid: 288). Perhaps Sor Juana's most quoted poem is one in which the poetic voice criticizes men for urging women to respond to their desires and later condemning them for being wicked and sinful creatures:

Hombres necios que acusáis
A la mujer sin razón
sin ver que sois la ocasión,
de lo mismo que culpáis.
Si con ansia sin igual
solicitáis su desdén,
¿Por qué queréis que obren bien
si las incitáis al mal?
(Ibid: 228)

Stupid men who accuse
women without any grounds
Without seeing that you are the cause
of the very thing that you blame.
If you eagerly
plead to be refused
why do you wish their good conduct
if you incite them to do wrong?

In this popular poem the Mexican writer takes a very modern stand, as the poetic voice ponders who is better: the person who pays to sin or the one who pays for sinning. In this manner Sor Juana addresses topics as timely then as now: machismo, the double standard, prostitution and its consequences.

By far the most important literary contribution of Sor Juana is *El sueño* (The Dream) or *Primero sueño* (1692), a long poem of 975 verse lines. *El sueño*, as Sor Juana called it in her *Respuesta*, is one of the most notable poetic creations of the seventeenth century. Embedded in a long poetic tradition closely scrutinized by Sor Juana's critics (Sabat de Rivers 1977; Perelmuter 1982; Alatorre 1995; Glantz 1995), it is also a rather hermetic poem. In it the soul leaves the sleeping body and seeks to know the totality of the universe. It soon realizes that it is doomed to failure because the intellect has many limitations. The gender of the poetic voice, insinuated through the frequent use of female mythological figures, is confirmed in the closing line: "el mundo iluminado, y yo despierta" ("the world illuminated and I awake") (De la Cruz 1951, I: 359, v. 975). The female voice concedes defeat, but underscores the importance of accepting challenges even though one may never reach one's goal. Thus it should not be surprising that Phaeton, the son of Apollo, as Sabat de Rivers has indicated (1989), is one of Sor Juana's favorite mythological characters. It is worth remembering that Phaeton, when driving the chariot of the Sun, came so close to Earth that his father had to destroy him and his chariot before the Earth caught fire. Sor Juana presents this mythological hero in order to show that it is essential to begin the quest even if it is an impossible one; the pursuit itself is what counts, for it will make us strong; it will enable us to seek the dream.

Conclusion

The writings of Clarinda, Amarilis, and Sor Juana reaffirm the central but often ignored role that women played in the development of Spanish-American literature. Their voices mark it with a polyphony through which we begin to distinguish differences: another world, another gender.

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17
Cleansing Mexican Antiquity: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and the *loa* to *The Divine Narcissus*

Viviana Díaz Balsera

The work of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1651?–95) is perhaps the most outstanding creole achievement of the Spanish American colonial period. By virtue of her intellectual prowess and creativity, the Phoenix of Mexico stands among the greatest writers of the Spanish Golden Age, firmly holding her American ground. For not only does her work demonstrate full mastery of the poetic and rhetorical codes of the Spanish Baroque, it also inscribes cultural and geographical distance from the metropolitan center. Despite the stature she achieved in her own lifetime, only on very few occasions did the "prodigy of the orb" (as one admirer addressed her in a romance in her honor) write about the Mexica pre-Hispanic past as one of the defining legacies of the politically, economically, and culturally consolidated creole subjectivity that she embodied. Although, according to Angel M. Garibay, she had notable competence in Nahuatl (Méndez Plancarte 1952: 365), wrote parts of and full *villancicos* in the language, and proudly referred both to America and Mexico many times in her lyrical poetry (Sabat-Rivers 1998: 270 n. 8), Sor Juana did not dedicate many pages of her work to the rich indigenous past of the lands of Anahuac.

And yet what Sor Juana did write is enough to allot to her a prominent place in the creole patriotic movement led by her friend and intellectual interlocutor, Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora (1645–1700), who promoted the revival of a grandiose, quasi-mythical image of the pre-Hispanic Mexica. Sor Juana wrote two *loas* or short introductory allegorical plays on the subject of the spiritual conquest of Mexico in 1688 and 1689. The first *loa* was for the auto-sacramental *The Divine Narcissus*, and the second one for *The Scepter of Joseph*, probably around the same time. According to Octavio Paz, the *loa* and the *auto El divino Narciso* may have been represented in Spain in 1688 or 1689, and published in the first volume of Sor Juana's work in 1690 (Paz 1989: 451). Georgina Sabat-Rivers thinks that the *loa* was never represented in Madrid, and follows Méndez Plancarte's opinion that neither was it represented

in Mexico (Sabat-Rivers 1998: 283 n. 45). The second *loa* and *auto* appeared in the second volume, which was published 1692. These *loas*, following the conventions of the genre, are very short and their function is to introduce the larger work that is the *auto*. But they are remarkable allegories expounding a creole view of the pre-contact past, the contact dynamics of evangelization, and the emergence of a Nahua Christian subject who would not lose touch with their old way of relating to the sacred. Due to their time and space constraints, I will only discuss the first *loa*, the most interesting of the two because of its complex intertextual engagement.

Students of the *loa* to *The Divine Narcissus* have proposed that although Sor Juana does not fully detach the Nahua gods from the demonic or deny their supernatural character, one can nonetheless see that they are "under the impact of Jesuit syncretism" (Alba-Koch 1997: 98; my translation). The latter was a modern doctrine developed by the Jesuits as they went to China and other parts of the pagan world, including the Americas, to spread the Word of Christ. Confronted by forms of paganism ethically compatible with Christian doctrine and fervent believers "in the ineluctable presence of God" (Jensen 1997: 57), the Jesuits held that knowledge of divine truth could be found in Gentile cultures. "Jesuit universality" (Paz 1989: 209), which at the end of the day was an appropriation and reinterpretation of paganism, was not entirely different from what early Christians had done with the Old Testament when conceiving it as a prefiguration of the New, or how they had transformed Greek–Roman religious beliefs into allegories of Christian truths. In relation to the New World, however, many Jesuits subscribed to the theory that the apostle St. Thomas the Greater had preached in the Indies during apostolic times. This theory had been proposed in the mid-seventeenth century by Augustinian chroniclers Alonso Ramos Gavilán and Antonio de la Calancha, who claimed that St. Thomas had evangelized in Peru and in other parts of America (Brading 1991: 365; Lafaye 1976: 183–4). In Mexico, the Franciscan chronicler Baltazar de Medina and Luis Becerra Tanco (a personal friend of Sigüenza y Góngora) (Llorente Medina 1996: 62 n. 30) based themselves on the Augustinians in proposing that St. Thomas had come to Mexico to preach (Brading 1991: 365). Such a theory explained the presence of cruciform signs in Mesoamerican symbolism, and religious practices similar to Christian rituals such as baptism, confession, and ingestion of the deity by communion (Lafaye 1976: 179; Cañizares-Esguerra 2001: 221).

In New Spain, the theory of an early evangelical presence of St. Thomas was first linked to the civilizing indigenous deity Quetzalcoatl by Sigüenza y Góngora, "probably the most learned historian, mathematician, and astronomer of the entire colony" (Bost 1996:178). Famously interested in Mexican antiquities and in identifying creole Mexico with a pre-Hispanic – not Spanish – past (Llorente Medina 1996: 21), Sigüenza y Góngora had been the recipient of *mestizo* historian Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl's accounts and collections of codices about indigenous history from several communities in the Mexican Valley. Alva Ixtlilxochitl (1578–1650) in turn, descendant of the royal families of Tetzcoco, was the first to posit that Quetzalcoatl was a white, bearded wise man who had taught the Olmecs morals

and civilization arts during the time of Christ's Incarnation (Brading 1991: 273–4), in the manner of an apostle (Cañizares-Esguerra 2001: 223). In 1675 the renowned polymath, university professor, and ex-Jesuit Sigüenza y Góngora collected all relevant historical testimonies about the evangelization of St. Thomas in America and published them in a pamphlet entitled *Pluma rica, nuevo Fénix de Occident* (Fine Feather, New Phoenix from Occident). This was a significant move towards the appropriation and redefinition of the pre-Hispanic legacy by a powerful sector of creole patriots interested in establishing the spiritual credentials of their *patria chica* or homeland as a place that had participated in the Christian community of nations since the beginning, and not only after the Spanish conquest. These credentials would earn Mexico the rightful "continuous, instructive, and politically legitimating past" (Pagden 1990: 91) appropriate to the federated kingdoms under the Spanish universal monarchy.

The attempt to write an apostolic evangelization into Amerindian histories and civilizations and thus bring them into Christendom 15 centuries before the conquest of America was then a way of establishing an identity for the kingdom of Anahuac separate from others under the Spanish Crown, but not unequal in spiritual and/or ontological footing. Christ had not forgotten the Amerindians when sending off the apostles into the world to preach his word. The glorious history of Mexico had not been inaugurated by the arrival of the Spaniards, but had begun to unfold in Amerindian antiquity. The numerous parallels in religious rituals, as well as the great disposition with which the Amerindians (particularly the Nahuas) had received the gospels, indicated that there was a remembrance, a trace of Christianity that, by the grace of God, had been left by the apostle St. Thomas-Quetzalcoatl in the Mexican highlands. Although Sor Juana did not necessarily subscribe to this view, it is the cultural context in which her *loas* should be read. Perhaps her most salient contributions to the invention of a Mexican homeland, the *loas* are allegories of a creole subjectivity constructing a sense of place, performing an "imaginary era" to bring forth order and coincidence from the dispersed signs of difference, wresting from the Spaniards in this way the authority to define Amerindian history.

The *loa* for the auto *The Divine Narcissus* opens with the celebration of the feast of Teocaulo, which was celebrated during the fifth month of the eighteen twenty-day months of the Mesoamerican calendar. Sor Juana consulted Franciscan Juan de Torquemada's *Monarquía Indiana* (Indian Monarchy) for the description of this rite (Méndez Plancarte 1955: 503). Published in 1615 in Seville, this learned and protracted chronicle (for which Torquemada drew without always acknowledging his sources from many chronicles whose publication had been prohibited in the previous century) (Baudot 1995: 523–4) was the text that defined Mexican pre-Hispanic history for the rest of the colonial period, and which "was destined to influence all subsequent chronicles until the twentieth century" (Brading 1991: 277). It must be pointed out that Torquemada, who had worked with Alva Ixtlilxochitl and his indigenous sources, held a negative view of the Amerindians, particularly of the Mexica, despite his erudite recognition of the orderliness of their republics and

polities. Rather than seeing traces of an apostolic evangelization or an intuition of truth in the similarities between indigenous religious practices and Christian ones, Torquemada considered indigenous practices to be satanic parodies of Christianity. Because the *Indian Monarchy* soon became one of the most important published texts about the Mexican pre-Hispanic past, it represented a monumental, mandatory intertext through, against, or in the margins of which the creole patriots had to reimagine and/or redefine the indigenous legacy that would conform their identity. In a gesture that can be interpreted as part of Sigüenza y Góngora's patriotic initiative, the Tenth Muse used her *loa* to cleanse the Mexica past from Torquemada and other chroniclers' debasing interpretations.

In the feast of the Teocaulo, the Mexica kneaded a human-size statue, image, or *ixiptla* of Huitzilopochtli with a dough made of seeds of amaranth and the blood of sacrificed children (Torquemada 1943, II: 71). The figure was then dressed up with the attire and insignia of the god and placed on its altar with great pomp and devotion. There was joyous dancing and singing in praise of the warrior god. On the last day of the month, many prisoners were sacrificed in honor of Huitzilopochtli in different temples around the city. The day after the feast, the priests or *tlamacazque* threw darts at the god's image: "The ceremony was performed, saying that it was to kill the God Huitzilopochtli in order to eat his body" (Torquemada 1943, II: 73; trans. Susan Castillo). Torquemada wraps up the chapter with a characterization of the feast as a satanic imitation of communion: "And this was their form of communion . . . and this food was called Teoqualo, which means God is eaten; and with this [ceremony] ended *such likeness and simulacra created by the Devil*, which was repeated every year in this month" (ibid; my emphasis).

Sor Juana will transform, displace, and undo with her allegory many aspects of the diabolical thrust of Torquemada's exegesis. In the opening of the *loa*, Music sings, honoring and exhorting the participants in the ritual to praise and celebrate the great God of the Seeds:

> Most noble Mexicans,
> whose ancient origin
> is found in the brilliant rays
> cast like arrows by the Sun,
> mark well the time of year,
> this day is given to laud
> and honor in our way
> the highest of our gods.
> Come clad in ornaments
> of your station the sign,
> and to your piety
> let happiness be joined:
> with festive pageantry
> worship the all-powerful God of Seeds!
> (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 152)

The characters Occident and America are allegories of the Mexica, and represent the indigenous nobility, knowledgeable about the corporate rites, cults, and practices that preserved Nahua community life. Music, accompanying the presumably pre-Hispanic dance of the *tocotín*, proclaims the origin of their illustrious Mexica ancestry as from the sun. Because of its life-giving powers, the sun is also called the great God of Seeds. And since the pre-Hispanic ceremony allegorized in the *loa* is the calendrical feast of the Toxcatl, the great deity celebrated is Huitzilopochtli, the god of war, whose figure was made of amaranth seeds, and who also displayed "stellar as well as solar and igneous associations" (Nicholson 1971: 426). However, as Beatriz Alba-Koch has correctly pointed out following Alfonso Méndez Plancarte, Sor Juana attributes to this figure not the triumph, rages, and courage of war, but the fertility of the land and fields, which is the domain of Tlaloc, the old Mesoamerican god of rain (Méndez Plancarte 1955: 503; Alba-Koch 1997: 101). It must be also pointed out that in some of his manifestations Huitzilopochtli was partially associated with Tezcatlipoca, the god of the smoking mirror (Nicholoson 1971: 426) and that the feast of the Toxcatl was dedicated to both of them (Torquemada 1943, II: 263–6).

What Sor Juana chooses to emphasize from Tezcatlipoca is the fact that he was considered the supreme, all-powerful god: Ipalnemohuani, "He by Whom All-Live": "whose beginning and origin they did not know, for he was not deemed to be from this visible world, nor mortal, but immortal, creator and maker of all things" (Torquemada 1943, II: 265; my translation). Not unlike Torquemada, then, Sor Juana focuses on the fact that the Mexica had hierarchies among their sacred beings. Thus the allegorical character of Occident proclaims: "So great in number are the Gods / that our religion sanctifies . . . / and though the gods are myriad, / . . . / the greatest God among them all / is our Great God, the God of Seeds!" To which his cohort replies: "And rightly so, for He alone / has long sustained our Monarchy, / for all the riches of the field / we owe to Him our fealty" (Cruz 1955 2). For Torquemada, however, the fact that Tezcatlipoca was held by the Nahuas to be the highest-ranking god and the one who brought forth all life only meant the subtle ways in which the Devil blinded those who had no knowledge of the true religion (Torquemada 1943, II: 38–41).

In Sor Juana, the metaphors embodying this belief in a principal god who gave sustenance to all things are not denounced as a diabolic error. Consequently, their beauty, dignity, and propriety move towards a *proximity* between the Mexica constructions of the sacred and those of Christianity, rather than towards a satanic deviation. Although ignorant of the true religion, the Mexica conceptions of the realm of the supernatural depicted in the previous passages show "a natural inclination to know the truth about God" (Aquinas 1952, I–II: 94, 2). For it is natural and correct to attribute to a supernatural force the riches of the land that brings forth sustenance of life and to conceive of a divine power that stands above all others, as Torquemada himself recognizes:

> Seeing so much beauty in the machine of the World, such variety of heavenly and earthly things, such grandeur of the Earth, such vastness of the Sea . . . All the Nations of

> the World (however barbaric and wild) could have had such reasons to know and understand that there exists a Lord, Maker, Mover, and Keeper of all things, and that He is far more excellent and of better nature than mankind. (Torquemada 1943, II: 5; trans. Susan Castillo)

Sor Juana, however, takes the truths produced by *lumbre natural* or human reason even further by making her allegorical Amerindian characters attribute to the God of Seeds not only the power to sustain corporeal life, but also the power to purify the soul when his own flesh was ingested: "But the protection of this God / is broader than continuance, / with the provision of our food, / . . . / He makes a paste of His own flesh, / . . . / and so our Soul he purifies / of all its blemishes and stains (Cruz 1955: 3). Because the allegorical mode allows for a simultaneous approximation to and a distancing from its referent, Sor Juana tropes here on the Mexican characters' belief in the soul as something that could be diseased, contaminated, or wounded independently from the body. But from the ethnographic representations of sixteenth-century missionary chroniclers, it is clear that the precolonial Nahuas did not have such a belief. The effects of moral transgressions, for the Nahuas, produced undesirable effects at the level of bodily energy and well-being: they brought people sickness, weakness, contagion, and even physical deformity. *Tlatlacolli* (breaking of a ritual taboo or prescription) (Burkhart 1989: 171) or *tlazolli* (dirt), the closest equivalents in Nahuatl to the Christian notion of sin, were not something that affected an internal animistic entity without leaving traces in the material realm of the body. The human being was not divided into two separate entities of body and soul. This is why physical well-being represented moral rectitude for the Nahuas, while this was not necessarily the case in Christian thought, where "the ethical world of sin [was dissociated] from the physical world of suffering" (Ricoeur 1967: 32). And indeed, St. Thomas writes that sometimes a man can lose the lesser goods of money and bodily health "for the sake of his soul's health and the glory of God" (Aquinas 1952, II–I: 87, 7).

The point to be kept in mind for now is that by attributing this Christian notion of the soul to pre-Hispanic Nahuas, Sor Juana's allegory stretches beyond what her historical sources would allow. It has been argued that under the influence of Jesuit Athanasio Kircher, whose thought was greatly informed by Neoplatonic hermeticism, Sor Juana searched for correspondences, similarities, and specular reflections between Christianity and pre-Hispanic religions in order to produce "a Christian synthesis of the universal religions" (Paz 1989: 224). But the translation of a Western, Christian subjectivity into a pre-Hispanic one without a traditional, historical correlate may suggest that Sor Juana did not attempt only to find correspondences, but also to impose them through the arbitrary, poetic power of allegory. By ascribing to the allegorical characters America and Occident the Christian duality of soul and body that historical sources about and by the Nahuas did not warrant, Sor Juana is constituting them into Christian subjects *avant la lettre*, before the arrival of the Spaniards, not unlike how Garcilaso imagines the Incas in his *Comentarios reales*.

And yet, in spite of such an arbitrary attribution, Sor Juana does not suppress or camouflage the representation of sacrificial bloodshed so central in historical Mexica religious practices. There are two allusions to human sacrifice in the opening dialogues. In the first, Music exhorts the people: "Let flow the purest blood, / give from your own veins, / to blend with many bloods / and thus His cult sustain" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 152). This may be a reference to the universal practices of auto-sacrifice in Mexica pre-Hispanic times, when all social classes of men, women, and children pricked themselves in their tongues, ears, and legs as offerings in order "to deter natural forces, via appeasement of the supernatural, from taking their most destructive course" (Klein 1987: 296). In the second instance, Occident claims that there were at least two thousand gods in the "Royal City" of Tenochtitlan, to whom bloody sacrifices with "entrails that still throb, / . . . [and] hearts that redly beat" (Cruz 1955: 2) were offered. This is an unmistakable allusion to human sacrifice by heart extraction or *tlacamictliliztli* and to the pulsating entrails of the human victim that could be seen when the body was cut open with the obsidian knife. Drawing from Motolinía, Diego Durán and Alvarado Tezozomoc's historical sources, Torquemada had posited in his *Monarchy* that the Mexica had introduced the practice of human sacrifice in the Mexican highlands. Following the example of a Huitzilopochtli/Devil outraged by the disobedience of some of his people, the Mexica henceforth adored him with this sacrifice, believing "it was what pleased him most, for this was his teaching . . . and he affirmed that their God ate only hearts" (Torquemada 1943, II: 115; trans. Susan Castillo). In this first scene of the *loa*, then, the *sacrificios cruentos* or human sacrifice offered to the manifold gods in Tenochtitlan are clearly depicted as an idolatrous cultural practice.

In the midst of the celebration of the calendrical feast of the Toxcatl, the personifications allegorizing Spanish Christian subjects make their entrance into the allegorical staging of one of the greatest encounters in human history. These are Christian Religion, dressed up as a Spanish lady, and Zeal, as captain general, surrounded by soldiers (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 155). Needless to say, Zeal's attire and companions are a reference to Spain's imposition of Christianity in the New World by military force. Horrified by the "superstitious cults" she encounters, Religion exhorts America and Occident to abandon their diabolic practice and to "open your eyes. Accept my word / and follow in the Path of Light, / fully persuaded by my love" (ibid).

The *loa* makes then a caustic critique of the institution of the *requerimiento*. The latter was a demand made to the Indians to recognize the temporal sovereignty of the Spanish Crown and accept the propagation of the Catholic faith, or to face the consequences of conquest by force. The jurist Juan López de Palacios Rubio composed the text of the *requerimiento* in 1512 as part of the Burgos Laws. The *extraña notificación* or strange news was supposed to be conveyed to the Indians in their own language by a translator (Lopetegui and Zubillaga 1965: 269). And indeed, Religion's request to give up "this unholy cult / which the Devil doth incite" and to follow the true Doctrine that she is bringing to them will be rebuffed and even ridiculed by

Occident and America. Because Religion's *requerimiento* to give up their religious beliefs while they are celebrating their established calendrical rituals seemingly transgresses all principles of reason, she is deemed a barbarian, a madwoman (Cruz 1955: 5). Bartolomé de las Casas' sardonic denunciation of the *requerimiento* in his *Very Brief Account of the Destruction of Indies* as an irrational and foolish institution resonates in this mocking dismissal of Religion's demands.

Infuriated by Occident and America's contempt (not aggression), which is no more than a reasonable reaction to a seemingly outrageous proposal, Zeal declares war and attacks them with all his terrifying military might. Once he has defeated and reduced their bodies, Religion steps in to protect them from death since "it is my nature to forgive, / I do not want their immolation, / but conversion, let them live" (Cruz 1955: 9). But Occident and America show only more contempt towards Religion's gesture, particularly as it followed Zeal's attempt to suppress the former's difference by force:

AMERICA
If in petitioning for my life,
and in exhibiting compassion,
it is your hope that I will yield,
that you will thus divert my passion,
employing arguments of words
as once before you employed arms,
then you will find yourself deceived,
for though my person come to harm,
and though I weep for liberty,
my liberty of will, will grow,
and I shall still adore my Gods!

To which Occident will add:

that there is no strength or might
that ever can my will impede
from *its just* course, free of control;
though captive I may moan in pain,
your will can never conquer mine,
and in my heart I will proclaim:
I worship the great God of Seeds!
(Castillo and Schweitzer 2001 156)

Deploying an impeccable concept of free will, America and Occident present the challenge of an insurmountable resistance to anything that may be imposed on a human being without his or her consent. They scorn Zeal's overwhelming power to control and even dispose of the bodies of the vanquished. Needless to say, Sor Juana is attributing to her Amerindian characters at this initial moment of contact a Christian formulation and knowledge of the power of free will that the historical record did not

warrant. For although Christianity (in quite ethnocentric fashion) posited the universality of free will, the radical separation between the individual and the world that it implied is one that the Nahuas did not have in their antiquity. In pre-Hispanic times, the survival and integrity of the individual "depended completely on collective activity in a continuous chain of religious festivals or their preparations" (López Austin 1988: 66). Moreover, all but very select groups of Nahuas went to the same place after death, the dreary Mictlan. Thus, although used by the friars as the Nahua equivalent to Christian hell, the great difference was that, for the Nahuas, Mictlan did not constitute a place of punishment for a life of sins, since most of them went there anyway, regardless of how they had lived (Burkhart 1989: 51–2). Needless to say, because the pivotal Christian notion of hell is inextricably linked with sin, punishment, and with the wrongful exercise of free will, the latter concept was practically irrelevant in pre-Hispanic Nahua ideology as applied to the notion of an afterlife. Therefore, one of the tasks of the missionaries in producing a Nahua Christian subject was precisely to inculcate the notion of free will that Occident and America depict in this passage.

Faced with the imperative to restructure an Other with full power of choice, Religion begins to blur difference by establishing its coincidences with Christian identity. And indeed, the supposedly demonic discourse of Occident is depicted as so close to Christian belief that Religion exclaims in dismay:

> O God! What figures.
> what parodies or ciphers
> of our sacred Truths
> do these lies seek to be?
> O wily Serpent!
> . . .
> How far does your malice
> attempt to imitate from God
> the sacred Wonders?
> (Cruz 1955: 13)

As the passage above attests, much like José de Acosta (who, although a Jesuit, rejected the notion that the Amerindians had had knowledge of the true God) (Acosta 1979: 217, 235, 257), Jerónimo de Mendieta (1993: 97, 107), and Juan de Torquemada, Religion does not attribute similarities between Christian and pre-Hispanic pagan practices to the natural inclination of reason to know religious truth, or to signs or emblems of Roman Catholicism in other great world religions (Paz 1989: 225). Rather, she ascribes it to the age-old desire of the Devil to be adored and praised like God. This is the topos of the Devil as *Simia Dei* or monkey of God, a paradigmatic instance of subversive mimicry where a discourse or practice of authority is imitated in order to displace it. For the closer some pagan religious practices and beliefs seemed to Christianity, the farther away they were held to be by virtue of a similarity

induced by a devil always desiring to usurp the place of God (Cervantes 1994: 28). In this sense, Religion's passage does not support Octavio Paz's position that in the *loas* Sor Juana expounds Jesuit religious syncretism.

And yet, because Sor Juana in her allegorical *loa* is arbitrarily representing Occident and America as sharing knowledge of some essential Christian beliefs, the fabrications of the *Simia Dei* or demonic mimetic difference, acquire another spin. For one thing, the "invincible condition of 'freedom of conscience' " (Méndez Plancarte 1955: 506) that America and Occident exhibit throughout the *loa* suggests that the agency of the Devil was either not fully contrary to their humanity or insufficient to deface it. Moreover, far from being an alterity that resisted and displaced Christianity, demonic mimetic difference in the lands of Anahuac became the primary vehicle to accede to the Christian faith:

> OCCIDENT
> Then tell me, though much more you swear:
> is this God formed of elements
> that are as exquisite, as rare,
> as that of blood shed valiantly
> and offered up as sacrifice,
> as well as seeds, our sustenance?
>
> RELIGION
> His Majesty, I say this twice,
> is infinite and without form,
> but His divine Humanity,
> found in the Sacrament of Mass,
> with mercy, not with cruelty,
> assuming the white innocence
> that in the seeds of wheat resides,
> becomes incarnate in these seeds,
> in Flesh and Blood is deified.
> (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 157)

As the passage above exemplifies, contact with demonic mimetic difference and an unfettered exercise of *lumbre natural* or natural reason is what allows Occident and America to be interested in the god proclaimed by Religion and to ask questions that require elucidation of the deepest and most essential mysteries of Christianity. In this way, the Devil may indeed have been put to work against himself by Religion's evangelizing intervention, as she had claimed earlier in the *loa* ("with your very own deceit / if God enables my tongue / I will convince you" (Cruz 13). But the plasticity of demonic mimetic difference and its propensity to be appropriated and relocated also makes it difficult to suppress. Because it mirrors identity while producing difference, it is hard to extricate as a form of alterity. The Devil in Sor Juana's *loa* is not a radically othered presence either because its powers are wanting, or because it is not a force constituted merely in oppositional terms.

And indeed, America claims that "powers divine" (Cruz 1955: 14) moves her towards wanting to know more about the new god Zeal and Religion are introducing. But because of the particular similarities and correspondences between the new and the old deities that produced such desire, this specific inclination to turn towards Christianity would not have been possible without satanic mimetic difference. By the same token, such a difference could not have been deployed in the Mexican highlands without the consent of divine will. The two agencies, satanic and divine, are thus working in tandem to effectuate the conversion:

> OCCIDENT
> My agony is exquisite,
> come, show me how in bread and wine
> this God gives of Himself to me.
> (AMERICA, OCCIDENT, *and* ZEAL *sing)*
> Now are the Indies all agreed,
> there is but One True God of Seeds!
> (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 159)

It is significant that Occident wants to see at once the new god that will be given to him as food ("mi agonía / quiere ver cómo es el Dios / que me han de dar *en comida*") (Cruz 1955: 21; my emphasis). His interest in the god's edibility suggests continuity between the way he has related to the deity present in the idol or *ixiptla* set up for the feast of the Teocaulo, and the way he has been taught to look at the Eucharist, in which Christ's flesh is present, according to the doctrine of transubstantiation.

But most remarkable of all is that the name (or signifier) given to the pre-Hispanic deity that America and Occident worshiped at the urgings of Satan is preserved in order to name the Christian god because of that name's propriety and accuracy. Even Zeal, who had been unable throughout the *loa* to relate to America or to Occident except by threatening their destruction, celebrates their new inclination to Christianity. He also accepts the signifier with which the highest pre-Hispanic deity was denominated, although it had been inspired by the Devil. Thus, while it can certainly be argued that referring to a new, unique signified (the Christian deity) modifies the signifier of the "God of Seeds," it is also the case that it cannot but retain traces of the old signified it used to stand for. Because of their similarity, the latter are not totally suspended or superseded by the new. The satanic God of Seeds, we should recall, was considered the ultimate provider and life-giver (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 152). With her allegorical authority, Sor Juana was mindful of attributing to this old demonic deity the capacity to purify the soul. Satanic mimetic difference thus slips into the colonial present from the pre-Hispanic past, just as some religious truths could not be totally abolished in pre-contact times just because a *Simia Dei* had tried to put them into his service.

In this way, Sor Juana's allegory does not represent the pre-Hispanic past as an utterly fallen one, nor the demonic as radically evil. As we showed above, she imputed

to America and Occident full knowledge of the agency of free will and of the concept of a soul as a separate entity from the body. This arbitrary attribution is what allows Sor Juana to subscribe to Jesuit syncretism, which located in pagan religious practices signs or figures of Christian truth, while also working with the idea of the Devil as *Simia Dei*, which demonized any such sign. Wielding these two apparently contradictory explanations, Sor Juana moves on her own, above and beyond binary logic, by seeing in the mimetic acts of Satan something that was never or could never be totally contrary to Christian truth. Much as it happens in the auto *The Divine Narcissus* that the *loa* introduces, the abjection of evil, the violence of exclusions, the limits between self and other, identity and alterity, all are mitigated by the poetic powers of the Tenth Muse's writing. As I have proposed elsewhere, the liminal space created by the suspension of opposites and/or by a mirror effect between them, is one of the uncanny signatures of Sor Juana's work (Díaz Balsera 1997).

And indeed, at the very end of the *loa*, all allegorical characters, "All," and not only America and Occident, celebrate the day in which they gained knowledge about the great God of Seeds: "Blessed the day / I came to know the great God of the Seeds!" (Cruz 1955: 18). These lines are certainly intriguing, as Sabat-Rivers (1998: 294) has pointed out, because the meaning of the fact that Religion and Zeal also celebrate the day when they themselves gained such knowledge of this god, is undecidable. If the great God of Seeds in the last two lines of the *loa* only refers to Christ, this would mean that even for Christian Religion and Zeal there had been a previous heathen moment in which knowledge of the Christian god was not present. Needless to say, this would open up extremely complicated readings. If, however, the lines refer to a Christian god that embraces names and aspects that Religion and Zeal could not know before meeting America and Occident, then the former pair's understanding of this god was modified, improved, enriched, by dealing with demonic mimetic difference in Anahuac. In any case, it is very hard to delimit the scope of the referent of the great God of Seeds at the end of the *loa*. This unreadability undoes the radical opposition between the Nahua satanic deities and Christ, and consequently also the chauvinist, colonialist version of a triumphal Catholic Church defeating an evil Amerindian past.

To conclude, by allegorizing intersections and continuities between Christian and Mexica religious practices, by attributing the concept of free will and the separation of body and soul to the Amerindian subjects, and by preserving the satanic name of the old pre-Hispanic deity to refer to the Christian true god, Sor Juana produced her own vision of Mexican antiquity. She imagined a non-antagonistic, non-exclusive mode of satanic difference that did not prevent glimpses of religious truth or the beauty of human reason from shining forth. In this sense, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz inserted herself in the Mexican creole movement that sought to bring the homeland or *patria chica* into the community of nations before the arrival of the Spaniards. The poetic powers of her *loa* cleansed the pre-Hispanic legacy from opprobrium and summoned it to live on in the name of the great God of Seeds, which had kindled the desire for the Christian deity, thus opening up its way into the heart of Anahuac.

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18
Hemispheric Americanism: Latin American Exiles and US Revolutionary Writings

Rodrigo Lazo

In 1821 Vicente Rocafuerte published in Philadelphia a 180-page book addressed to the countries of America and more particularly to the residents of his native Guayaquil, a port city on the Pacific that would become part of the country of Ecuador. *Ideas Necesarias a Todo Pueblo Americano Independiente, Que Quiera Ser Libre* (Essential ideas for every independent American country seeking freedom) called for independence from Spain and positioned the US Declaration of Independence as a beacon of light for people throughout the Americas fighting against colonial rule. Rocafuerte (1783–1847), who would make his way to Cuba and Mexico in his support of liberation movements and ultimately become Ecuador's president, drew inspiration from the location of his self-imposed exile: "¿Y en dónde puedo encontrar recuerdos mas sublimes, lecciones mas heróicas, mas dignas de imitación, y ejemplos mas análogos a nuestra actual situación política, que en esta famosa Filadelfia? ("And where would I find memories more sublime, lessons more heroic and more worthy of imitation, and situations more analogous to our actual political situation, than in the celebrated Philadelphia?") (Rocafuerte 1821: 1). Philadelphia functioned as the model city of the model republic, the "asylum of the oppressed, center of lights, bastion of liberty, spirit of independence," a city that, according to Rocafuerte, had reached out to humanity with tremendous strength and generosity in 1776.

For Rocafuerte, Philadelphia was not only a city that harbored Latin American anti-colonial fighters such as himself, but also the birthplace of important writings that could provide a model for independence in the Americas. In addition to an 18-page prologue addressed to Rocafuerte's beloved compatriots (*paisanos*), *Ideas Necesarias* contains translations into Spanish of prominent writings of the US Revolution: Paine's *Common Sense*, the Articles of Confederation, the Constitution, and the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration is sandwiched between the opening and closing remarks of a speech by John Quincy Adams delivered on July 4, 1821. The

inclusion of this speech is indicative of Rocafuerte's goal in publishing the book, for Adams closes with an exhortation that all people imitate the writers of the Declaration. *Imitation* is a controlling trope in the production of Rocafuerte's book, as he calls on the Americas to "follow the footsteps" of the "heroes and great men of North America," even as he aims to educate his readers by instilling a spirit of liberty and tolerance.

Rocafuerte was not alone in turning northward for a model of revolutionary activity, and his veneration is exemplary of the ways some of Latin America's intellectuals interpreted the most prominent documents of the US Revolution. In the 1810s and 1820s, writers and revolutionaries from areas that would go on to become the nations of Cuba, Peru, and Mexico made their way to US cities and published a variety of Spanish-language books, pamphlets, and newspapers. Many of these writers attempted to fashion American (in the broader sense) political traditions in opposition to European monarchical institutions. This purported oppositional commonality, which draws together the United States and Latin America, is what I call "hemispheric Americanism," an effort to mold movements for independence on the most salient documents of the US Revolution. Hemispheric Americanism was influenced by Enlightenment principles that placed "humanity," often in an abstract sense, above conditions of racial and economic difference within emerging nation-states. While the French Revolution also fed the currents of revolution in the early nineteenth century, Latin American intellectuals were less than comfortable fashioning themselves after French revolutionaries because of a potential association with terror. By contrast, the United States offered a model of revolution that had led to the establishment of a new, stable nation-state. The youth of the United States and the absence of rigid national boundaries in Latin America during its wars of independence fueled the hemispheric tendencies of this logic. Latin American revolutionaries in Philadelphia believed that the Americas were the seat of a *natural* aversion to monarchy. They drew an opposition between "the false glitter of a petty imperial crown" and the "sublime institutions left behind by Franklin, Hancock, Hamilton, and that group of great men" (Rocafuerte 1821: 7–8). With Spain as the enemy in a war of words and arms over the future of the continent, exiles placed their faith in a system of government which relied on a constitution that divided power between a central government and individual states.

While hemispheric Americanism reached its zenith in the 1820s, it continued to influence political thinking throughout the nineteenth century. Below, I discuss how some of Latin America's most prominent interpreters of US revolutionary writings established connections between the ideals of liberty and tolerance expressed in US foundational writings and the growth of republics in the southern Americas. As late as 1889, José Martí would express wonder at the compositional process that produced the Declaration of Independence in an article describing public celebrations on the Fourth of July: "Some words [Jefferson] included and deleted about ten times . . . because it is one thing to throw colorful phrases to the wind like bubbles and another to hammer into the hearts of men, like a flagpole into its holder, ideas that will help

the people rise up" (Martí 1963 XII: 255). But Martí developed a vexed relationship with the United States that would lead him to supplement his veneration of US revolutionary writings with an anti-imperialist critique of the United States. In his oft-quoted essay "Our America," Martí warned Latin America to beware the imperialist ambitions of his country of exile. In the corpus of his writing, Martí's celebration of US achievements was tempered by a trenchant analysis of what he described in another article as "the crude, unequal, and decadent character of the United States, and the continual existence within it of all the violences, discords, immoralities, and disorders of which the Hispanoamerican peoples are accused" (Martí 2002: 333).

Long before Martí, a different set of objections to the logic underpinning hemispheric Americanism emerged in Latin America from none other than Simón Bolívar (1783–1830). Bolívar's critique can lead us into a more specific analysis of the ideological underpinnings of hemispheric Americanism. On the one hand, Bolívar saw a common aspiration between his own fight against Spain and the US revolutionary opposition to England. In proposing that South America be united into a single nation to work as a "colossus" against Europe, Bolívar wrote of the United States: "Her policies should be united with ours, and our common resources, like an unassailable barrier, should be pitted against the ambitions of Europe" (Bolívar 1951 I: 57). As such, Bolívar tapped the anti-European strain in hemispheric Americanism. But he parted with the likes of Rocafuerte by refusing to turn to the US Constitution as a model for Latin America. In a letter dated 1829, Bolívar argues that the Constitution works for the United States, but he takes issue with a "federal form of government":

> Such a system is no more than organized anarchy, or, at best, a law that implictly prescribes the obligation of dissolution and the eventual ruin of the state with all its members. I think it would be better for South America to adopt the Koran rather than the United States' form of government, although the latter is the best on earth. (Bolívar 1951 II: 738)

Using the Koran facetiously as an extreme example of what would happen if a document from another time and place were imposed on Latin America, Bolívar implies that the US form of government was well suited for its own people but is not necessarily translatable to other contexts. In this sense, Bolívar differed from Rocafuerte. Bolívar's reference to the Koran is instructive, for it raises a question about the role of religion in society, which is not to be discounted given that one of the differences between the US Revolution and subsequent efforts in Latin America was the role of the Catholic Church as a social and political institution. Latin American revolutionaries believed that "progress" in an Enlightenment sense would lead to the weakening not only of monarchical rule but also the Catholic Church.

Bolívar attempts to distance himself from the US Constitution because he rejects the powers granted to the states and also because he perceives important differences in

culture and geography between North and South America, a point he makes in his address for the inauguration at the Second National Congress of Venezuela in 1819:

> Regardless of the effectiveness of this form of government [federal system] with respect to North America, I must say that it has never for a moment entered my mind to compare the position and character of two states as dissimilar as the English-American and the Spanish-American . . . Does not *L'Esprit des lois* state that laws should be suited to the people for whom they are made; that it would be a major coincidence if those of one nation could be adapted to another; that laws must take into account the physical conditions of the country, climate, character of the land, location, size, and mode of living of the people. (Bolívar 1951 I: 179)

Bolívar's concern with the US "federal system" is that states retain a degree of autonomy. He does not oppose a strong centralized federal government. Bolívar believes that in the US Constitution the federal government is not sufficiently strong, and thus he wants to see Latin American territories unite under a completely centralized government. At the same time, he emphasizes the particularity of different contexts by calling on governments to adapt to the particular needs of people in specific locations, in contrast to Rocafuerte's call for an adoption of the US model.

Bolívar's division of the Americas along Anglo and Spanish lines, in part inflected by differences between Protestantism and Catholicism, challenges the vertical organizing principle of the hemispheric sense of "American," which in many Spanish-language writings from the early nineteenth century functions as an adjective and a noun referring to both North and South America as well as the Caribbean. At that point in history the metonymic substitution of "America" for United States had not reached widespread acceptance, and thus many Latin Americans read the United States as being *of* America rather than America itself. Nevertheless, a veneration of US foundational documents and a belief that the United States was a model republic, as expressed in the writings of hemispheric Americanism, fueled the growing perception that the United States was the representative and primary agent of American freedom. Eldon Kenworthy has argued that the appropriation of the term "America" by the United States stems from an exceptionalist myth that the United States is the place where the project of liberty, self-determination, and material progress first began. In turn, "America" becomes the vanguard for the advance of freedom and thus provokes enmity from the "old world" (Kenworthy 1995: 18). While Kenworthy is more than willing to attribute this myth-making to US officials from Monroe to Bush Sr., he overlooks the early role of Latin American intellectuals in accepting US exceptionalism even as they attempted to commandeer that exceptionalism for their own political projects. And, as I discuss below, the sense of exceptionalism was at times deployed not only for the United States but for the entire hemisphere in a language of "natural" superiority.

The importance of Spanish-language publications such as *Ideas Necesarias* and some of the pieces I discuss is that they bring forth a more complicated picture of Latin

American interpretations of the United States than facile US anti-imperialism would permit. In the contemporary period, particularly following the CIA-backed overthrows of the governments of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala and Salvador Allende in Chile, many US anti-imperialist critiques place the burden of Latin America's oppression on policies of the US government. But how do Latin Americans participate in supporting those oppressive structures? A more rigorous analysis of the way power functions in the Americas calls for attention to contexts in which the elite support policies that serve their political and economic interests while concomitantly supporting US expansionist or imperialist policies. In some cases, this analysis would require the work of economists, but in others we can consider how Latin America's intellectuals have at different points in history inscribed competing visions of ways the United States has influenced Latin America. Among these visions is the type of celebration of the US Declaration of Independence and the Constitution that fuels hemispheric Americanism.

The most important context for the emergence of hemispheric Americanism was Philadelphia, which, along with New York and New Orleans, was an important site for the publication of Spanish-language texts in the early nineteenth century. A symbol of liberty for many Latin American intellectuals, the city became a hotbed of activity by revolutionaries, some of them in exile, as well as by liberals from Spain. Connected through organizations of Freemasons, these exiles were intent on fomenting insurrections in Latin America (McCadden and McCadden 1969: 53; Leal and Cortina 1995: xiii, xvii). It appears that most of them were men, but ongoing research is needed on whether women played a part in the exile circles of Philadelphia. As an important publishing center, Philadelphia facilitated the publication of periodicals, pamphlets, political treatises, and even works of fiction. Consider titles published in the city: Félix Varela's paper *El Habanero* (1824), known as the first revolutionary periodical in Cuban history; Manuel Lorenzo de Vidaurre's *Plan del Perú* (1823), a critique of the colonial system in that country; Fray Servando Teresa de Mier's *Bosquejo Ligerísimo de la Revolución de Mégico* (Very brief sketch of Mexico's Revolution) (1822); and the anonymous novel *Jicoténcal* (1826), which has been attributed to Varela, a priest and philosopher. Part of the allure of Philadelphia for revolutionaries was that it was the site of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, which fed Latin Americans' wonder at the city that they believed had changed the political landscape of the hemisphere. Not long after Rocafuerte called it *la famosa Philadelphia*, the Cuban poet José María Heredia (1803–39) used the same phrase upon arriving in the city: "Ten days have passed since I arrived in the celebrated Philadelphia." In one of his letters, Heredia describes the architecture and planning of the city in detail and concludes that it is "the first city of the United States" (Heredia 1939: 33, 39). Heredia's letter betrays a sense that he was on already trodden ground, and that was because others had indeed gone before him.

Exiles carried to Philadelphia a long-running debate about the role of monarchical traditions in Latin America. In 1812, the printing house of José Blocquerst, at the corner of Spruce and Fifth streets, published the anonymous 16-page tract *A Todos los*

Que Habitan las Islas y el Vasto Continente de la América Española (To all the inhabitants of the islands and the vast continent of Spanish America), by "El Amigo de los Hombres" (The friend of men). This pamphlet, like Rocafuerte's *Ideas Necesarias*, addressed an audience that stretched across the hemisphere, implying that the publication would circulate outside of the United States. As Nicolás Kanellos has noted, "Judging from the number of political books published at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the overwhelming motive for the Spaniards, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and other Spanish Americans in the United States to bear the cost of printing and distribution of their written matter was their desire to influence the politics in their homelands" (Kanellos 2001: 22). In his pamphlet to the Americas, "The friend of men" was responding to an article by Alvaro Flórez de Estrada in the newspaper *El Español*. According to the pamphlet, Flórez de Estrada had put forth an argument that proceeded as follows: the new governments of Latin America had usurped authority by instituting reforms and constitutions without the support of the people; Latin America could not organize itself around the "Anglo-American" system of states because conditions were different; and "Spanish America" had recognized the sovereignty of King Ferdinand VII (El Amigo 1812: 2–3). This argument implied that it was the people who had granted legitimacy to monarchical rule. To this last point, the "The friend of men" responded by saying that it was not the people who had granted sovereignty to the king but Spain's functionaries in the Americas. "The friend of men" also argued more generally that the people have the primary right to govern themselves and to oppose them is "blasphemy against the holy teachings of nature" (ibid: 4). The appeal to nature is a central tenet of hemispheric Americanism. All people have a right, the pamphlet goes on, to raise a cry and overthrow tyrants. Then the pamphlet turns to the argument about the differences between Anglo America and Latin America in two interesting ways. First, it holds up the natural resources of Latin America to argue that it is in a better position than the United States to establish an independent government. As such, the pamphlet turns what might be construed as a cultural difference into an economic argument. Secondly, the pamphlet turns to slavery to argue for a common experience between Latin American countries and the United States.

The pamphlet's discussion of slavery and blacks helps to clarify the ways hemispheric Americanism protected the interests of white creoles rather than other segments of the population such as blacks and indigenous people. One of the arguments against independence that pro-Spain newspapers deployed at various points in the nineteenth century was that the end of colonial rule would prompt black populations to rise up and take over in a bloody show of force. "The friend of men" responds by saying that it is ludicrous to believe that only Spain can institute the type of security measures necessary to prevent a slave uprising. Instead, the author argues for maintaining slavery on the model of Rome, under which independent Americans would "attempt to bring happiness to all men of all classes and ranks" (ibid: 8). The belief here is that under a so-called Roman model, slaveowners would treat their slaves generously. This is important because it shows that supporters of

hemispheric Americanism interpreted a notion of liberty in accordance with the US Constitution's retention of slavery. Hemispheric Americanism was deployed largely for the benefit of an unmarked class in Latin American society, namely white creoles, who sought the benefits that were, in many cases, available to those who were born in Spain.

But some proponents of the tenets of hemispheric Americanism, Rocafuerte among them, opposed slavery, which was not a major part of the economy in all parts of the Americas. Only certain territories held large numbers of slaves, among them Cuba and Puerto Rico. So while "The friend of men" calls for "liberty and the right of free association" and simultaneously defends slavery, other writers did not find it necessary to take up slavery directly. But then neither did they consider the role of indigenous people in their populations. For if hemispheric Americanism proposed that the US constitutional model be transplanted to other Latin American countries, the question that remained was what role would indigenous populations play in a new nation-state? How would they be incorporated (or not) into society? Perhaps the allure of the United States was that it presented a model of government that excluded indigenous people from participation. In other words, the documents that appealed to hemispheric Americanists did not incorporate different populations into the national body politic as citizens with full rights. As such, hemispheric Americanism relied on a version of liberty in the Americas that placed white men in control of society. To see that more clearly, we can return to Rocafuerte.

Ideas Necesarias depicts how Rocafuerte's view of "man," the beneficiary of revolution and a new constitution, is a privileged gendered subject. Born into one of the most influential families in his native Guayaquil, Rocafuerte studied in Europe, served as a diplomat for Mexico, and, became Ecuador's president (Mecum 1975: 10–11). In the 1820s, Rocafuerte published not only *Ideas Necesarias* but also numerous other writings analyzing constitutional principles and, more particularly, the US Constitution. In the following passage, Rocafuerte displays his admiration for the US Constitution: "Los defensores del poder monárquico han perdido su causa en el tribunal de la razón, desde ahora cincuenta años que el Genio de la independencia nos está señalando la Constitución de los Estados Unidos como la única esperanza de los pueblos oprimidos, como el único fanal que indica al hombre el rumbo de su felicidad" ("The defenders of monarchical power have lost their lawsuit in the court of reason; it is now fifty years since the Genius of independence has been guiding us toward the Constitution of the United States as the only hope of oppressed people, the only beacon indicating the way to happiness for man") (Rocafuerte 1821: 9). The ostensible connection here is between the lettered men of the US Revolution and the anti-colonial creoles of Latin America, a point stressed when Rocafuerte draws a connection with "our brothers the valiant sons of Boston" (ibid: 11). Since most of *Ideas Necesarias* consists of translations of US documents, the assumption is that this book and others will transmit the concepts of revolution and constitutional law to a new community of revolutionary men. It appears, then, that Rocafuerte attempts to establish an intellectual genealogy from the male

founders of the United States to the male founders of new Latin American nation-states, including himself.

At the core of this genealogy is a feverish opposition to monarchy, which, in part, explains why Paine is a central figure for hemispheric Americanism. "With his celebrated work *Common Sense*, he contributed more than anyone to seizing the despotic scepter," Rocafuerte writes (1821: 11–12). According to Rocafuerte, Paine's contribution had been to point out that while England's monarchy paled in comparison to the vices of other kings in history, it was still "a monstrous system of government" (ibid: 11). Paine's turn to print culture to call for arms served as an inspiration not only for exiles in the early nineteenth century, but also for Cuban exiles who would publish newspapers in US cities later in the century.

Rocafuerte closes his introduction to *Ideas Necesarias* by calling on his native Guayaquil to imitate the Declaration of Independence and establish a new government that will provide the advantages of free commerce and representative government. Guayaquil would grow economically by declaring independence, he argued, because a free government is antithetical to monopolies and royal companies. Liberty would allow Guayaquil to claim the riches of nature at its disposal. As a city with a river that would provide easy access to the Pacific, Guayaquil was destined "by nature to become the commercial center of the West Coast of America" (ibid: 15). Thus Rocafuerte invokes the greatness that he associates with Philadelphia, the model US city, to envision a liberal political and commercial future for his home. The idealism of that vision does not account for the economic realities of Guayaquil in the early nineteenth century, but what interests me here is Rocafuerte's use of "nature," an important concept for the development of hemispheric Americanism.

Hemispheric Americanism drew its strength from the sense that nature had bestowed on America (in the broader sense) the greatness that had emerged in the political vision of the United States. While "nature" would provide an ideological justification for US exceptionalism, in the early nineteenth century many Latin Americans saw it as a hemispheric, not a national, gift. The sense of natural right to the land is evident in articles that appeared in a pamphlet-sized periodical titled *El Habanero*, which Félix Varela published from 1824 to 1826, first in Philadelphia and then in New York City. Calling for Cuban independence, the periodical was unsparing in its critique of colonial authorities in Cuba, tyrannical monarchy, and the greed of those who profited from the island. Like Rocafuerte's writings, *El Habanero* presented *American* independence as the alternative to ossified European colonial rule. In other words, the logic supporting Cuban independence was that the entire hemisphere had a natural right to control its future. Varela drew on the language of nature by developing an opposition between "naturals" and "Europeans" (*naturales y europeos*). Nature and American independence were inextricable. In an article titled "Love of Americans for Independence," Varela writes, "Los americanos tienen por enemigos a los anti independientes, sean de la parte del mundo que fueren, y aprecian a todos los que propenden a su libertad aunque fuesen hijos del mismo Hernán Cortés . . . Los americanos nacen con el amor a la independencia" ("Americans are enemies of those who

oppose independence, no matter what part of the world they are from, and they [Americans] esteem all supporters of American liberty even if these supporters are the children of the one and only Hernán Cortés . . . Americans are born with a love of independence") (Varela 1997: 75). The reference to Cortés shows the importance of that figure as a symbol of Spain's excesses in the Americas and a recognition that it is impossible for creoles to erase that stain.

Varela argues that love of independence stems from the interaction of human faculties with the place of birth. The child of the Americas is barraged by sensations from nature and thus gains a love of home as its own place. Thus the relationship between a child of the Americas and the territory is direct and takes precedence over a colonial affiliation. Varela wrote, "El americano oye constantemente la imperiosa voz de la naturaleza que le dice: yo te he puesto en un suelo que te hostiga con sus riquezas y te asalta con sus frutos" ("the American hears constantly the imperious voice of nature, which says: I have placed you in a soil that beckons you with its riches and assaults you with its goods") (ibid: 80). An "immense ocean" divides America from European tyranny. Varela's nature is not national but hemispheric, and thus the opposition established here is part of a broader debate over the riches of the Americas versus Europe. As Antonello Gerbi argued, American independence movements challenged European notions that the terrain, flora, and fauna (as well as the inhabitants) of the Americas were inferior to those of Europe. American creole beliefs in the right to self-government and even their own intellectual gifts were often tied to the "acclaim of the unquestionable richness of the New World in precious metals" (Gerbi 1973: 184). Creoles who rose up against their colonial masters were, in effect, asserting the strength of nature in the American continent.

It is with this emphasis on nature as a dimension of hemispheric Americanism that I read the novel *Jicoténcal*, published anonymously and translated as *Xicoténcatl* by Guillermo I. Castillo-Feliú (all citations are from Castillo-Feliú's edition). A historical romance about Hernán Cortés' conquest of Mexico, *Jicoténcal* has been considered by critics as a novel of colonial Mexico (Castro Leal 1964). Salvador Bueno (1992) provides a brief overview of debates over the novel's authorship without offering a clear conclusion. More recently, Leal and Cortina (1995) have attributed *Jicoténcal* to Varela and emphasized its Philadelphia connection. Leal and Cortina consider it a part of US literature, publishing their edition under the auspices of the US Hispanic Literary Heritage Project, an ongoing effort to locate, preserve, make accessible, and study the literature of people of Latin American descent from the colonial period to 1960. *Jicoténcal* intertwines a love plot with historical events and intertwines the language of Latin American revolutionaries from the nineteenth century with historical events from the conquest of Mexico in the early sixteenth century. For example, the indigenous state of Tlascala is described in the language of republicanism. The novel's preoccupation with relations between indigenous populations and white colonizers could lead to interesting comparisons with English-language US historical romances of the 1820s — James Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking tales, Lydia Maria Child's *Hobomok*, and Catharine Maria Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*. But despite its

Philadelphia connection, *Jicoténcal* shifts the focus of the history of European–indigenous contact outside of the United States.

In keeping with the transnational dimensions of the exile community into which Varela integrated himself in Philadelphia, *Jicoténcal* was targeted at multiple reading audiences. The novel was available in bookstores in New York and Philadelphia, but was also aimed at readers in Latin America who would be instructed by the republican principles espoused in the text (Leal and Cortina 1995: xvii). William Cullen Bryant, in his review of *Jicoténcal*, situated the book within a hemispheric project of anti-colonial inscription. Praising the novel's clarity in presenting "pretty just and enlightened notions on political government," Bryant noted that *Jicoténcal* "if read by those who speak [the author's] language in the Southern republics of America, may be useful" (Bryant 1827: 336–7). The phrase "Southern republics of America" resonates with the hemispheric vision of exiles such as Varela and Rocafuerte. Bryant also designates *Jicoténcal* as a part of "the Spanish literature of America" and thus points toward a hemispheric literary association. At the same time, he called attention to the novel's political intervention into matters of government and civil rights. "Next to the public journals the readiest and most effectual way a writer can take to disseminate his opinions on these subjects, is by ingeniously mingling them with the contents of works of fiction," he wrote (ibid: 337). For readers not inclined to pick up political treatises such as Rocafuerte's *Ideas Necesarias*, Bryant concluded, *Jicoténcal* offered a political argument under the guise of a historical romance. Kirsten Silva Gruesz has argued that Bryant's review of *Jicoténcal* portrays the northern and southern republics as neighbors that influence one another. Furthermore, she argues, Bryant echoes tenets of the Monroe Doctrine, including notions of a North–South alliance and opposition to European intervention in the Americas, but does so without placing the United States in the role of the enforcer (Gruesz 2002: 55).

The Monroe Doctrine, originally delivered in 1823, emerged roughly contemporaneously with many of the documents of hemispheric Americanism. The Doctrine shared conceptual points with the writings of Latin America's exiles, including the notion that the Americas are a separate sphere from Europe, both in terms of geography and political control. (Here I refer to the basic tenets of the Monroe Doctrine and not its application.) But where hemispheric Americanism parts company with the Monroe Doctrine is that the former emphasizes the importance of nation formation outside of the United States, whereas the latter focuses on the geopolitical goals of the United States. Either way, the binary division between the Americas and Europe that sustains these documents takes precedence over national differences and local divisions based on social categories. *Jicoténcal* acknowledges the importance of race and gender while deploying the figure of the indigenous Jicoténcal as a representative of creoles fighting against Spain. Is it any wonder, then, that Bryant noted that characters in *Jicoténcal* are "very unprejudiced, enlightened, and philosophic savages, and, in their notions of government and religion, approach very nearly to the modern *liberales* of Spain" (Bryant 1827: 343)? The reference to liberals connects the novel to the exile

community in Philadelphia, which included writers not only from Latin America but also opponents of the monarchy from Spain.

The two dominant plot lines of *Jicoténcal* are a battle for territorial and political control of Tlascala and the contest over the love and bodily control of Teutila, a "beautiful" indigenous woman of a nearby province. On opposing sides are Cortés and Jicoténcal, the former a conniving despot with a prurient interest in the maiden and the latter a revered warrior whose sense of justice is as intense as his devotion to Teutila. Thus a parallel emerges in a fight over Tlascala and an indigenous woman, with those two representing principles of republican government and American nature. The connection between indigenous people (Jicoténcal) and creoles (or Spanish liberals, per Bryant) is developed through an allegory that connects Tlascala to the United States and the nascent or yet-to-be-founded republics of Latin America. As such, the conflict played out in the novel is not simply between Spanish invaders and indigenous people, but between European tyranny and the defenders of liberty who believe in hemispheric Americanism.

Both as a territory and nation, Tlascala represents a notion of freedom that stands as a third entity between the despotism of the Aztec leader Montezuma and the tyrannical aspirations of Cortés. Faring little better than Cortés, Montezuma is variously described as tyrannical, cruel, and hateful (Varela 1999: 82). In fact, Tlascala has resisted militarily the control of the Aztec empire and refused to trade with its enemies. "The spirit of independence and liberty" that reigns in Tlascala emerges from model citizens who support the republic:

> The inhabitants' character was bellicose, long-suffering, frank, little given to pomp, and the enemy of effeminacy. Its government was a confederated republic; sovereign power dwelt in a congressor senate, composed of members elected one for each party of those in the republic. (Ibid: 8)

The Tlascala "congress or senate" is republican in general but also retains elements of federalism, for "the capital's four neighborhoods were considered to be four independent districts" (ibid). The executive and judicial branches of power were based in the districts and subordinate to the legislative branch. Although lacking a single executive, Tlascala had more in common with a US model of states within a Union than with a strong centralized government of the type that Bolívar envisioned for the southern Americas. "Confederated republic" can be read as an allusion to the "Articles of Confederation," which Rocafuerte included in *Ideas Necesarias*. To emphasize the deliberative nature of Tlascalan government, several scenes in the novel are set in the Senate. It is the Senate that must approve any action taken by the armed forces of Tlascala. Ultimately, Cortés is able to subdue Tlascala not in battle but by penetrating the republic's body through an alliance with a corrupt senator who places his self-interest above the public good. Cortés' intrusion into the Táscala Senate portrays him as devious at the same time that it warns readers in the 1820s to beware of the efforts of monarchical forces to influence deliberative bodies.

The character who embodies republican resistance to excessive authority is Jicoténcal. In a conversation with overtones of a political debate, Jicoténcal says that he cannot fathom how virtuous men "can be submissive to a despot who, the more powerful he becomes, the more he tyrannizes you" (ibid: 56). Equating the rule of one with tyranny, Jicoténcal believes the only people who would consent to live under a king are those "whose ignorance makes them incapable of looking out for themselves or whose vices and degradation make them insensitive to oppression" (ibid: 57). While Jicoténcal is ostensibly speaking in generalities, he is simultaneously attacking the Spanish monarchy. His listener is Diego de Ordaz, a virtuous Spaniard who is, in principle, opposed to Cortés but loyal to the Spanish monarch and the military chain of command. Ordaz responds by defending the great deeds of kings of Spain and argues that monarchs rule for the public good. When Ordaz says that Spanish honor is in part identified with "fidelity to his king," Jicoténcal replies, "That, friend, is my great argument in favor of our popular government" (ibid: 57). In the case of Jicoténcal, honor stems from defending and participating in a deliberative society. Popular government as defined by Jicoténcal is one in which the law establishes a virtuous path toward a common good. In other words, law as developed from "all there is that is good in society" tempers the passions that can affect an individual leader. The law to which he alludes is justice. In another conversation, Jicoténcal's father, known as the elder Jicoténcal, describes Tlascalan government to Cortés in the following terms, "Justice is its fundamental law, and love of country molds its spirit" (ibid: 52). In contrast to the Tlascalans who govern from a belief in justice, Cortés is at times a slave to passion. Similarly, Montezuma, once an honest leader and now a "haughty tyrant" (ibid: 57), cannot contain his passions and superstitions.

The stark contrast in how Jicoténcal and Cortés handle passion is most clear in their attitude toward Teutila. Repeatedly described as extremely attractive, Teutila is a character who serves the plot development as an object of Jicoténcal's love and Cortés' desire for possession. While most of the characters are based on historical figures, Teutila is an invention of the author. She is repeatedly referred to not by her name but as *la Americana* or *la hermosa Americana*. In other words, Teutila is an allegory for American land. In turn, America is associated with the attributes of Teutila: virtue, truthfulness, and loyalty. Guillermo Castillo-Feliú translates *la Americana* as "American maiden." While that is a fine translation of the gendered *Americana*, the inclusion of the word "maiden" deemphasizes the metonymic shift from Teutila to America, even if "maiden" maintains the Spanish word's feminine association. In the Spanish version the repeated usage of *la Americana* calls attention to the fact that Cortés and Jicoténcal are in a battle over beautiful America. And isn't that, after all, the battle raging in the southern Americas in the 1820s, one in which forces supporting monarchy are trying to stem the tide of independence sweeping the hemisphere?

Teutila's position as object in a battle over governmental control is indicative of the place allotted to women in the new republics. It also reflects the exclusion of women as active participants in the fraternity linked with the publication of Spanish-language texts that supported hemispheric Americanism. Most of the known authors of

Spanish-language books and pamphlets published in the United States during Latin America's wars of liberation were men, and their attempt to develop a vertical geographic continuity with US revolutionaries reflected a connection based on democratic masculinity. The character of Teutila calls attention to the ways in which the battle for control of the Americas between Spanish authorities and anti-colonial Creoles was framed as a contest between men.

Jicoténcal further develops the treatment of Teutila as indicative of the different intentions for America held by Spanish colonial authorities and liberators of the early nineteenth century. Cortés holds Teutila as a prisoner, abuses her verbally, and attempts to seduce her through gifts. Ultimately, he attempts to rape her: "Violence and force would have finally consummated the crime had the frightening screams of the innocent victim, fighting off her angry oppressor, not caused great alarm in the encampment" (ibid: 80). Already having an affair with an indigenous woman, Doña Marina, Cortés sees Teutila as one more conquest in his march to take over the Aztec empire. Sandra Messinger Cypess has argued that Marina serves as a negative foil for Teutila's virtuous character. Or, putting that another way, Marina "symbolizes all the evils and misfortunes that Americans suffer when they accept European ways" (Cypess 1991: 45). The book's sexual politics are, at best, questionable, since it presents Marina as a conniving seductress while Teutila is a representative of the virgin (American) land that has been undefiled by European conquerors. In its characterization of the indigenous woman Malintzin Tenepal, *Jicoténcal* echoes many representations that have transformed Tenepal into a national myth of La Malinche as a treacherous woman who colluded and slept with the enemy. The novel presents a challenge to critical readers: how to interpret the character of Marina in the tradition of Chicana criticism that recuperates positive agency within this figure (Alarcón 1997)?

The novel is more concerned with Teutila than Marina, particularly in its relation of how Jicoténcal and Cortés respond to Teutila, the representative American woman. Jicoténcal is willing to place the republic above love and desire. Because Teutila is a native of a neighboring state, Jicoténcal has no right to claim her for Tlascala and thus she remains in Cortés' power. To liberate her from Cortés would be an act of aggression not sanctioned by the Tlascala Senate. When Teutila escapes from Cortés and runs to Jicoténcal, the latter responds that he cannot raise his arms to protect her. "Tlaxcala has not given us the arms to defend her," Jicoténcal tells his troops. "The voice of the nation is the only one that the republic's soldier ought to hear, and the nation cares little whether the passion to which one's interests are sacrificed is noble or lowly, virtuous or criminal" (Varela 1999: 76–7). Ultimately, Jicoténcal subordinates his love and desire to the republic. This choice implies that acting for the good of the republic takes precedence over controlling territory. Jicoténcal will have the "beautiful" America(n) only by adhering to the principles of just government. Eventually, the two marry, only to have their love undone when Jicoténcal is executed at the hands of Spaniards. But that moment in the novel when Jicoténcal chooses loyalty to

republican principles, an abstraction, over the bodily reality of the woman he loves, points us to the ideological quandary of hemispheric Americanism. Latin American exiles seeking to establish a hemispheric connection with the United States are more drawn to the abstract concepts of governmental rule than to considering how best to govern the people of the nascent republics. Putting that another way, they are more concerned about the US Constitution and the anti-colonial fight against Spain than about the indigenous people in their countries. Jicoténcal functions as a ventriloquist for the creole position, but is also a representative of populations that are not taken into account in hemispheric Americanist principles. His death at the end marks a symbolic end to the participation of indigenous people in the future of the Americas. The principles, however, remain, and the opposition between Europe and America at the basis of hemispheric Americanism can be read as a strategic argument supporting the interests of white creole elites.

The belief that the founding documents of the United States presented a model that could be emulated by Latin America's new nation-states was possible only by elevating abstract governmental principles over the realities of the people in the new countries. Rocafuerte could call on his compatriots to imitate the US Declaration of Independence and Constitution while overlooking the realities of racial and class difference (and the way those two are intertwined) in the local context of his country. As such, hemispheric Americanism could emerge only in the generalities of abstract life, not in the material realities of the countries in question. Exile in Philadelphia helped facilitate the political abstractions of hemispheric Americanism because the city provided not only a haven but also a separation from the places that revolutionaries were trying to change. The language of wonder and marvel that is used by Rocafuerte and others to describe "the celebrated Philadelphia" is motivated by the political traditions that have been developed there. Functioning as both a publishing center and a site for political debate, Philadelphia offers a space outside the Latin American context. Temporarily, exiles step out of their countries and enter a US-based tradition and attempt to shift the locus of US constitutional principles away from the United States and toward the entire hemisphere.

Part of the allure of hemispheric Americanism for Latin America's revolutionaries was its rhetorical appeal as a rallying call for opposition to European monarchy. By associating Latin America's wars of independence with the United States, particularly because it was a country founded in opposition to monarchy, revolutionaries attempted to convince their compatriots to follow suit. Their belief that the notion of "America" stretched far beyond the United States calls attention to the uses of that word in the early nineteenth century and helps us recover the importance of the United States as a publishing center for Latin America's exiles. For the United States, the writings of Latin American exiles in the early nineteenth century are a reminder that the notion of America as exceptional was not always bound to one nation.

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19

Putting Together the Pieces: Notes on the Eighteenth-Century Literary Imagination

Douglas Anderson

A little Key may open a Box, where lies a bunch of Keyes.
Roger Williams

Sometime in the middle of the seventeenth century – which is, oddly enough, when the eighteenth century begins – Roger Williams wrote a public letter to his fellow citizens in the town of Providence containing a parable of the relation between religious and political authority. You can find the letter in the anthology of primary works to which this essay is one of many friendly (if not necessarily harmonious) companions.

Imagine a ship at sea, Williams asks his "Loving Friends and Neighbors." Isolated in the ocean's cold immensity, it easily comes to resemble a miniature world, a "true Picture of a Common-Wealth" containing "many a Hundred Souls" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 277). In the story that Williams tells, the passengers and crew represent different languages, cultures, and religions, all "embarqued into one Ship": Papists, Protestants, Jews, Turks – the same antagonistic spiritual and national communities that had been spilling one another's blood throughout the Mediterranean and European world for centuries. The implications of this simple picture are both ominous and deeply interesting. Williams' fledgling colony at Providence was just such a ship, he implied. So, for that matter, was New England as a whole, with its unprecedented mixture of native and emigrant peoples vying for room to live. What conclusions followed from such an arresting image of the human species, with its attendant cargo of bitter antagonisms, afloat in uninhabitable space?

The Thirty Years War had only recently ended as Williams wrote. The Protestant populations of central Europe had been devastated, for more than a generation, by military and paramilitary violence, by the disease and the starvation that civil war brings in its wake. A simultaneous conflict between Charles I of England and the

radical Protestant armies of Parliament had resulted in the king's execution in 1649 and the establishment of a civil protectorate under Oliver Cromwell that amounted to a military dictatorship. The closing decades of the century would witness a prolonged continental war between the Catholic forces of Louis XIV and the Protestant armies and navies of the Netherlands and England, eventually united under William of Orange, the Stadtholder of the Dutch Republic, after the English were forced to purge themselves, a second time, of a monarch whose religious sympathies had begun to seem suspect. The Glorious Revolution of 1689 was brief and comparatively bloodless, but it did not put an end to the ideological and imperial contests that would keep Europe and much of North America at war for most of the succeeding century. What could be done about such stubborn and bloody divisions among peoples of different faiths, different visions of the universe, all committed to creating a world purified of contamination by false ideas and false institutions? Roger Williams thought he knew.

Liberty of conscience was the first condition of common survival. No single form of worship could be imposed on all of the earth's citizens, and no individual form of worship might be denied to any. These were the two hinges of toleration, as Williams described them, upon which a viable future turned. Without them the fragile vessel of human community would certainly break apart. But toleration alone could not be expected to secure peace and happiness. Unlike the ocean or the vast celestial spaces that Galileo and Kepler had begun to probe, human forbearance was not an infinite resource, immune to the operations of folly or madness. A third element was necessary to the general safety: the authority of the captain to "command the Ship's course," enforcing "Justice, Peace, and Sobriety" among its heterogeneous occupants. The ship's crew must work. The passengers must pay their freight. Officers and commanders must assume responsibility for the well-being of the community. Mutiny in deed or word must be punished. The "Father of Lights" made these necessary principles and concessions plain, Williams thought, "to such as willingly shut not their Eyes." The canopy of the night sky was thickly sown with alternate worlds – with other "Lights," Williams discreetly reminded his biblically sophisticated readers – the sheer density and richness of which were a rebuke to the petty differences of one, increasingly insignificant globe.

Over a century later, Benjamin Franklin would invoke the Father of Lights, from the New Testament letter of James, to a very similar end and under strikingly similar circumstances. This evocative resemblance between the words of two very different men, separated by more than four generations, points to the deep roots of eighteenth-century intellectual life in the thoughts and words of their seventeenth-century predecessors. Historical experience tends to display a remarkable indifference to the artificial boundaries and labels imposed on it by scholars. The present is always a more or less disorderly anthology of objects and documents handed down from the past – collected, sorted, catalogued, or accidently preserved in the cultural montage that any given historical period represents.

On June 28, 1787, a warm summer afternoon in the State House at Philadelphia, the 81-year-old Franklin addressed an audience of his own loving friends and

neighbors who (like the citizens of Providence in Roger Williams' day) were engaged in a bitter argument over authority. The first volume of Max Farrand's *Records of the Federal Convention* preserves this suggestive moment, one of only two speeches that Franklin contributed to the Convention's deliberations. The delegates at Philadelphia, too, were embarked on an exceedingly dangerous political voyage. Four or five weeks of hard work had brought them to a standstill over the question of representation in the new national congress that, Franklin's colleagues hoped, would repair the serious structural flaws in the existing Articles of Confederation. The interests of the large states and the anxieties of the small ones seemed irreconcilably at odds in their efforts to replace a dysfunctional system of government with a more effective and more lasting mechanism of union. Their intractable disagreement was "melancholy proof of the imperfection of the Human Understanding," Franklin declared that afternoon. Like Williams, he suggested "applying to the Father of Lights to illuminate our understandings" (Farrand 1966 I: 450).

"God governs in the affairs of men," Franklin assured his weary and irritable colleagues, affirming his own lifelong conviction of a Providential presence in human history – the same presence to which Roger Williams paid tribute in the name of his tiny settlement on Narragansett Bay. Without the Deity's "concurring aid," Franklin asserted, "we shall succeed in this political building no better than the Builders of Babel." Indeed, he hinted that the collapse of the American republic might prompt future generations to abandon the hope of rational self-government, resigning themselves to the ancient, destructive forces of "chance, war, and Conquest." The operations of this grim trinity were evident throughout the historical record. Unless the forces of pride and selfishness could be overcome, they would ultimately preside over the kind of cultural shipwreck that Williams and Franklin jointly feared.

In the absence of divine help, Franklin suggested that the delegates to the Convention were conducting an exercise in futility, "groping as it were in the dark to find political truth." To address this predicament, he proposed beginning their general meetings with a prayer, to be offered each day by a different Philadelphia clergyman, so that no denomination or sect would feel slighted or favored. Roger Sherman of Connecticut seconded Franklin's proposal, and by some accounts the idea greatly pleased George Washington, who as the presiding officer of the Convention must have felt particularly frustrated by the political impasse that it had reached. But Alexander Hamilton, among others, had reservations. There was no money in the budget to pay a rotating chaplain. Word might leak out to the public that the Convention had grown desperate and fallen back on prayer as a last resort. Religious differences might flare up in the Convention sessions themselves, inflamed by the same prayers that were intended to extinguish them. They were meeting, after all, in the heart of a traditional Quaker community where public silence, not public prayer, was the mark of truly selfless devotion. Franklin's motion never came to a vote. The pieces of the newborn United States would have to be put back together without an open appeal to the Father of Lights.

In one sense the fate of Franklin's motion might seem to mark the collapse, rather than the continuation, of Roger Williams' vision. The members of the Federal Convention willingly chose to shut their eyes to the implications of their common plight. The Father of Lights no longer had a meaningful role to play in human affairs. But such a conclusion, as Robert Ferguson reminds us, would be premature. "The idea of Providence always surfaces at critical times in American politics," Ferguson observes, drawing all ideological and sectarian antagonisms into a common idiom of submission to the vast (and productively vague) design of a benevolent Creator (Ferguson 1997: 77).

By the late eighteenth century, God no longer inscribed omens in the sky, chastized a sinful humankind with plagues, or wrote prophetic messages in the wings of 17-year locusts, as the young Ezra Stiles (a future president of Yale) once learned from his orthodox and credulous father. But neither had American, English, or Scottish minds surrendered to the stark materialism and atheism of the most radical French thinkers of their time. In Henry May's wonderful phrase, even so exacting a skeptic as David Hume refused to give off an odor of brimstone. Hume might socialize with the demonic intelligences of Baron d'Holbach's Parisian coterie, but he was not really one of them. For most English and American writers, history and nature offered persistent evidence of transcendent design, elusive and inscrutable though the Designer's purposes might be. The mind was crippled by vices (as Franklin reminded the delegates to the Philadelphia Convention), but it was also capable of discerning order in the natural world and imposing order on the social one, provided the religious lessons of humility and charity prevailed in the councils of learning and power. When figures of authority forgot these critical lessons, their social, political, or intellectual subordinates were no longer content to wait on the will of God to punish their transgressions, however eager those subordinates might be to appropriate Old Testament metaphors of retribution in defense of popular resistance.

For these reasons, political and religious crises invariably reinforced one another throughout the eighteenth century in British North America. The Latin epigraph on liberty that Samuel Sewall translates for his anti-slavery pamphlet in 1700 comes from William Ames, one of the most popular of the seventeenth-century English theologians among New England's religious leaders: "Forasmuch as Liberty is in real value next unto Life: None ought to part with it themselves, or deprive others of it, but upon most mature Consideration" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 323). In the decades following the appearance of Sewall's pamphlet, the contingencies of "mature consideration" would seem progressively less compelling before liberty's unequivocal claims. Emory Elliott notes that the Ipswich clergyman John Wise was sent to prison in 1687 for preaching on the necessity of resistance to the royal government of Massachusetts, nearly eighty years before the Stamp Act protests ignited the agitation that ultimately led to revolution (Elliott 2002: 286). A more famous clergyman, Cotton Mather, helped to write the first American declaration of independence, explaining the reasons behind a 1689 coup that a number of Boston's citizens finally staged against the autocratic rule of Sir Edmund Andros, their royal governor.

Massachusetts had been illegally stripped of its governing charter, Mather and his colleagues complained, leaving the colony "without any liberty for an Assembly," under the rule of a royal commission:

> In little more than half a Year we saw this Commission superseded by another, yet more Absolute and Arbitrary . . . And several Companies of Red Coats were now brought from Europe, to support what was to be imposed upon us, not without repeated Menaces that some hundreds more were intended for us . . . It was now plainly affirmed both by some in open Council and by the same in private converse, that the people in New-England were all Slaves and the only difference between them and Slaves is their not being bought and sold . . . We do therefore seize upon the persons of those few Ill men which have been (next to our sins) the grand authors of our miseries: Resolving to secure them, for what Justice, Orders from his Highness with the Parliament shall direct . . . In the mean time firmly believing: that we have endeavoured nothing but what meer Duty to God and our Country calls for at our Hands, we commit our Enterprise unto the Blessing of Him, who hears, the cry of the Oppressed; and advise all our Neighbours for whom we have thus ventured our selves to join with us in Prayers and all just Actions for the Prosperity of the Land. (Mather 1689: 1^{r}–2^{v})

Some of this language may seem incongruous coming from the author of "The Negro Christianized," but Cotton Mather participated fully in what Michael Kammen (1980) terms the creative "biformities" of colonial America: the mixture of resonance and dissonance in colonial idealism that drifts in disquieting fashion along the axis between paradox and hypocrisy. The so-called "Puritans" never viewed themselves as pure. Their successors in the so-called "Age of Reason" fully grasped the profound irrationality of human nature. This fundamental incongruity threads its way throughout eighteenth-century American writing.

The radical sermons of Jonathan Mayhew and some of his ministerial colleagues, beginning in the middle of the century, gradually prepared the hearts and minds of New England congregations to cast off even the residual loyalty to the king and Parliament that Mather's 1689 declaration leaves intact. This preparational preaching is a catalyst for the ideological and emotional evolution that Robert Ferguson has ably traced, through a period of several decades, from sermons, to anti-government pamphlets, to declarations and constitutions. The Boston Tea Party of 1773 reflects the urban street politics of Samuel Adams and his allies, but it draws on intellectual roots cultivated in the highly politicized pulpits of New England. Religion in America, as the English politician Edmund Burke famously declared, was "a refinement on the principle of resistance," a role that religion had served in England itself during the seventeenth-century Civil War (1640–9) and one that it would serve again during the American abolitionist campaigns in the mid-nineteenth century (Ferguson 1997: 45). Benjamin Franklin and his opponents clearly appreciated this rich tradition of activist piety when they considered the efficacy of prayer in the Constitutional Convention.

Franklin's proposal during that warm Philadelphia summer was not actually voted down – an act of repudiation too drastic even for the fervent Alexander Hamilton to consider. At 42, Hamilton was roughly half Franklin's age, with less than half of Franklin's diplomatic gifts, but even he recognized the emotional and rhetorical heritage to which Franklin's words appealed. The suggestion to have a daily prayer was quietly and carefully passed over. The delegates were apparently so cautious as to avoid even a motion to table this unexpectedly conventional idea from their highly unconventional senior colleague. Courtesy alone may account for their unusual reticence, but on the threshold of the dog-days of July courtesy was wearing thin. Wariness offers a better explanation for the failure of Franklin's motion to carry.

Religious forces were very much alive in 1787 – more varied in their expression, perhaps, but as potent in their implications as they had ever been in British North America. Even a religious liberal like Thomas Jefferson – who was enjoying the secular delights of Paris as the Federal Convention held its Philadelphia meetings – would write in the same momentous year of 1787 that God's justice "cannot sleep forever" in the face of America's stubborn refusal to eradicate slavery. Some drastic instance of "supernatural interference" in the course of history was not improbable. The slaveholding regimes might expect a visitation of Divine wrath, Jefferson implied, though he could not quite bring himself to use such openly biblical language. If the plantation economy of the South remained unchanged, an apocalyptic racial war was inevitable in America. Jefferson had no doubt about whose side the Almighty would favor in such a contest between victims and oppressors (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 537).

Roger Williams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson are men of distinctly different temperaments, representing different generations that span different centuries, but they share a vivid perception of the fragility of human hopes. Underneath the glittering shell of civilized society lay the volcanic passions of anger, fear, bigotry, greed, and lust. Jefferson's apocalyptic anxieties erupt almost without warning in a section of the *Notes on the State of Virginia* entitled "Manners," as if he intended this anomalous relationship between title and contents to dramatize the grim paradoxes of human nature. Reason was perpetually menaced by violence. No legal or artistic product of human ingenuity could afford to be indifferent to the psychological and historical perils that Roger Williams compared to the volatility and power of the ocean.

When Crevecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* dissolve into the chaotic "distresses" prompted by the outbreak of the Revolution, he too pleads for divine illumination amid the tempestuous forces of his time: "Great Source of wisdom!" Crevecoeur's desperate narrator exclaims, "Inspire me with light sufficient to guide my benighted steps out of this intricate maze!" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 507). Sixty years earlier, the bucolic couplets that Richard Lewis wrote describing an April journey across the Maryland landscape abruptly explode into yet another cry of religious anxiety:

TREMENDOUS GOD! May I not justly fear,
That I, unworthy Object of thy Care,
Into this World from thy bright Presence tost,
Am in th'Immensity of Nature lost!
And that my Notions of the World above,
Are but Creations of my own Self-love;
To feed my coward Heart, afraid to die,
With fancied Feasts of Immortality!
These thoughts, which thy amazing Works suggest,
Oh glorious FATHER, rack my troubled Breast.
(Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 410)

Attentive readers of eighteenth-century American writing will find it repeatedly marked by this acute sense of cultural and psychological anxiety. Indeed, the imagination of this period relished its insecurities – cultivating them as tools of religious incitement or as antidotes to the kind of delusional self-love that Richard Lewis fears. The soul and society were sick and in need of medicine. Lewis' fellow residents of British North America – who were, like Roger Williams, "studious of our common Peace and Liberty" – would prove to be endlessly resourceful in their pursuit of home remedies.

Consider, for instance, Sarah Kemble Knight. On the face of things this worldly businesswoman would seem almost completely untouched by the intense spiritual concerns which rack the breast of Richard Lewis. She is at times quite literally lost in the immensity of nature, as she makes her way on horseback along the New Haven post road in 1704, but even amid the darkest stretches of "the dolesome woods" her predicament seldom strikes her as an allegory of the human condition or as a shadowy picture of her own soul. Her travel journal resembles a modern reporter's notebook, a tourist's diary, or a writer's log, where snippets of comic verse and amusing anecdotes could accumulate throughout her trip – a rich source of material for "the story of my transactions and travails" that her relatives would undoubtedly long to hear when she returned to Boston. Madame Knight is nothing if not entertaining. But none of the relations and friends who flocked to welcome her home expected merely to be entertained by her narrative. Knight's closing expression of gratitude to her Great Benefactor for watching over "his unworthy handmaid" is, in its understated way, as telling as Richard Lewis' fearful and prayerful lines (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 365–73).

Like Lewis, too, Knight is oddly reticent about the purposes behind her journey. She does not directly explain her intention to oversee the administration of a dead relative's estate in New Haven, nor does she disclose why a Boston shipmaster's wife would choose to make this trip by land rather than by sea. Knight is not traveling for pleasure alone, despite the enjoyment that she clearly derives from many of her experiences, including the vivid exclamation of surprise that she elicits from the young woman who greets her at the end of the first leg of her five-month journey: "Law for mee – what in the world brings You here at this time a night? – I never see a

woman on the Rode so Dreadfull late, in all the days of my versall life. Who are you? Where are you going?" The questions never get a definitive answer, partly because Knight claims to be offended by their rudeness, but partly because no simple explanation could quite account for Knight's anomalous presence "on the Rode," or her decision to trade the comforts of Boston for an arduous October ride through the New England woods, accompanied only by a series of "Guides" who seem less than attentive to her needs and limitations.

Knight's thoughts and the journal in which she records them are her primary social and spiritual resource through this trip: preserving some verse that she wrote in homage to the consoling sight of the moon, "composing" her private resentments in writing when a group of tavern drunks keep her awake, or entertaining her with "pleasing Imaginations" during long, lonely stretches on horseback. "Poor weary I slipt out to enter my mind in my Jornal," Knight reports as she escaped the "sneering" atmosphere of another country "Ordinary" or inn. A deep fascination with her own thoughts marks her as an heir of the introspective spiritual world that produced Anne Bradstreet's *Meditations Divine and Moral* (1664), as well as a forebear of Richard Lewis, whose own "active Thoughts" ultimately convince him that the Creator will not abandon him. Like Bradstreet, too, Knight could chide herself in verse for exaggerating her own hardships and ignoring the "ten thousand ills" that make the lives of others whom she encounters along the way unrelievedly wretched. In all its range and diversity, Knight's world resembles the heterogeneous human population on board Roger Williams' figurative ship: simpering country bumpkins and manipulative merchants, Indians and slaves, courteous governors with famous names, and anonymous farmers whose racial attitudes strike the status-conscious Knight as unacceptably inclusive.

Yet it is the nature of travel to include, to break down the boundary of familiar places and routines, confronting the traveler, for better or for worse, with the unexpected: the "black hoof" and the white hand mingling freely in the dish, as Sarah Knight put it in her disturbing description of the egalitarian mealtime practices of Connecticut farmers and their slaves. Knight could easily have controlled this degree of exposure to unsettling novelties by journeying to New Haven, then on to New York, and eventually back to Boston aboard a coastal trading vessel, perhaps under the direct supervision of one of her husband's maritime colleagues and assisted by a crew of sailors whose manners and interests would have been quite familiar, if not entirely polished. But like Crevecoeur's wandering farmer or like the island-hopping citizen of the Atlantic world that Olaudah Equiano quickly becomes, she is marked by the sheer observational hunger of her time.

The globe had grown dramatically during the centuries of exploration, trade, and colonization that began with the voyages of Da Gama and Columbus. It was time for consciousness to catch up – time for the mental and spiritual geography of human beings to assimilate the vast metamorphosis in physical and cultural geography that had taken place since 1500. The bitter religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries both retarded and fueled this process of mental voyaging. After 1689, when

the English state achieved a measure of political stability, the conceptual assimilation of "new" worlds was essentially unimpeded. Throughout the eighteenth century, writers in British North America would prove themselves to be ambitious and restless itinerants.

Eighteenth-century American writers (and readers) were "provincial" only in the narrowest sense: that they lived in a collection of provinces administered by the British empire. Physical and mental travel mark their literary experience. Sarah Knight's excursion is trivial compared to the wanderings of Elizabeth Ashbridge, traversing the Atlantic Ocean and the northeastern seaboard, as she struggled to cope with a contemptuous husband and the demands of an insistent inner Voice seeking to shape her religious life (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 421–31). Obedient to an equally vivid experience with God's transformative inner Word, John Woolman spends his life in nearly constant motion, primarily through the southeastern colonies, hoping to prompt in his fellow Quakers the urgent conviction that slavery was inconsistent with the Christian religion. "I felt inward drawings toward a visit to that place," Woolman confessed as he planned a trip to the Pennsylvania wilderness to meet with the Indians (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 450). Inward drawings and outward movement generate the reciprocating form of his journal – a half-mystic, half-physical presentation of experience closely related to the spiritual sensations that Jonathan Edwards sometimes felt "of being alone in the mountains, or some solitary wilderness, far from all mankind, sweetly conversing with Christ, and wrapped and swallowed up in God" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 416).

Though not the traveler that Ashbridge and Woolman were, Edwards frequently broke away from his study to ride or to walk in the woods and fields, probing the inner landscape of his soul as he observed the outward spectacle of nature:

> I often used to sit and view the moon, for a long time; and so in the daytime, spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things: in the meantime, singing forth with a low voice, my contemplations of the Creator and Redeemer. And scarce anything, among all the works of nature, was so sweet to me as thunder and lightning. Formerly, nothing had been so terrible to me. I used to be a person uncommonly terrified with thunder: and it used to strike me with terror, when I saw a thunderstorm rising. But now, on the contrary, it rejoiced me. I felt God at the first appearance of a thunderstorm. And used to take the opportunity at such times, to fix myself to view the clouds, and see the lightnings play, and hear the majestic and awful voice of God's thunder: which oftentimes was exceeding entertaining, leading me to sweet contemplations of my great and glorious God. (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 416)

In slightly different keys, perhaps, both Edwards and Sarah Kemble Knight dedicate private songs to the spiritual significance of the moon – just as Edwards (along with Emily Dickinson and Mark Twain) shares Benjamin Franklin's celebrated attraction to the play of lightning. The scientist and the clergyman found these displays of electrical force "exceeding entertaining," though their mutual delight carried them in quite different intellectual directions.

William Byrd takes to the roadless roads of the Virginia wilderness for more worldly reasons than those that prompt religious wanderers like Edwards or Woolman, but he too sees the experience of travel as a complex metaphor for the ubiquitous presence of boundaries – dividing lines – separating genders, classes, and peoples as well as geographical bodies. His story of the 1728 Virginia/North Carolina boundary survey is crisscrossed by numerous psychological and moral frontiers, not the least of which is the one that both joins and separates his "secret" from his "public" history. Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* is broken into four parts that place him in England, in France, and in Philadelphia at the various moments of leisure, over a period of nearly twenty years, when he worked on his memoirs. In the last months of his long diplomatic mission to the French court, he suggested that the book might eventually be revised "if I live to get home" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 469). But getting home is often a distant and uncertain prospect. The leisurely examination of papers and records is not always possible. A writer must be prepared to write on the move. All of these figures join Lewis, Jefferson, Crevecoeur, Equiano, Lahontan, Charlevoix, Vandera, Bossu, and Bougainville in the long list of peripatetic imaginations that constitute a significant literary legacy of the eighteenth century.

The traveler could not count on being able to retrieve from his or her excursion the kind of deep, inner assurance that Jonathan Edwards drew from a thunderstorm or that Richard Lewis ultimately secured on his ride to Annapolis. Personal metamorphosis, in fact, is not a primary goal for most of the eighteenth-century travelers whose letters, journals, and meditations form so large a portion of the period's written work. Near the end of the century, in England at least, the growth of the poetic observer's mind provided all the justification that Wordsworth or Coleridge would require for their strenuous walking tours. William Blake's "Mental Traveller" reports on a succession of extraordinary figurative visions such "As cold Earth wanderers never knew." Earth wanderers like Crevecoeur, Byrd, or Knight, however, are intent on making a very different sort of collection, one that reflects the inexhaustible contemplative richness of the physical and social world. They are purveyors of what they and their readers considered to be the "curiosities" of North American life. In this sense, the goals of the traveler, the writer, the religious itinerant, and the scientist are indistinguishable from one another.

Roger Williams gathered a collection of Algonquin words and phrases from his Narragansett neighbors and translated them, for the benefit of future English-speaking settlers, as *A Key into the Language of America* (1643). Williams had a missionary's interest in communicating with the native people and competing for souls with the boastful Jesuits of Canada, but he was also a pioneering linguist and ethnographer, preserving yet undiscovered "Rarities" of native culture. The Baron de Lahontan recognized that his letters from New France contained potentially valuable historical information, but they were also an eclectic repository of "a great many curious remarks" that he had collected during his sojourn among the "naked philosophers" of the New World (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 375). For curiosity's sake alone, he was prepared to publish them. Similar curiosity about the social practices of

the settlers in Connecticut leads Sarah Kemble Knight to preserve some anecdotes about their laws, manners, and "Diversions."

Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702) – the huge historical encyclopedia of New England that he produced at the beginning of the eighteenth century – is an anthology of notable exploits, brief biographies, and miscellaneous "wonders" that reprints many of Mather's earlier books in order to form a compelling exhibit of colonial life, one in sharp contrast to Lahontan's *New Voyages*, which appeared in an English translation the following year. Near the end of the century, the buoyant Carrio de la Vandera performed a similar encyclopedic service for South America: *El Lazarillo: A Guide for Inexperienced Travelers* (1775). Though closer in spirit to Vandera's weighty "Mr. Lead" than his effervescent "Mr. Cork," Cotton Mather would have shared the admiration for Tacitus that leads Vandera to close his own digressive prologue with an aphorism from the Roman historian: "Not all that is great is good, but all that is good is great" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 434). Benjamin Franklin was attracted to just such moral nuggets as this one and wove hundreds of them through the pages of Poor Richard's annual almanacs, much as Cotton Mather loved to weave them into the baroque sentences of the *Magnalia*. Instructive information and instructive sayings were items of equal interest to the compulsive eighteenth-century collector.

The word "anthology" enters English usage in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and literally means a collection of "flowers": flowers of verbal expression, the anecdotal flowering of experience, a bouquet of memorable actions or memorable people collected from the past. All of these writers saw themselves as, in some measure, anthologists. They are collectors of colorful or curious specimens – "jewels of instruction," Olaudah Equiano calls them near the close of his 1789 autobiography (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 554) – assembled for the information and delight of their readers. The lovely painting of an alligator and a snake by Maria Merian, decorating the cover of the anthology that this essay accompanies, is itself part of a collection – a zoological and artistic "jewel" intended to suggest that while the reptiles of Surinam may be formidable, they will fight selflessly to protect their young. Strange appearances are not inconsistent with noble passions – an insight subtly rendered in Merian's image that the Baron de Lahontan or Roger Williams would certainly endorse.

The apparent disorder of any particular collection is often less important than the intrinsic interest of its individual items. Some anthologists, however, are only in search of a specific kind of "flower." Jonathan Edwards, for instance, as he puts together the notebook that he calls "Images of Divine Things," is on the lookout for metaphysically suggestive phenomena in nature: animals, plants, or behavior that seem to "shadow forth" his understanding of the spiritual world. Thomas Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* were written in response to the fairly broad inquiries of a French diplomat, an opportunity that allowed Jefferson to unpack a wide range of observations that he had been collecting for many years about his native state. In the second part of his autobiography, Benjamin Franklin presents two little anthologies

that he had assembled during the early years of his printing business: one a collection of 13 virtues that he had distilled from his reading, the other a collection of inspiring poetry and prayers that he used as a way of reminding himself (on a daily basis) that life was much more than just a business. He kept track of how effective this form of moral and spiritual schooling was by using data sheets where he could collect his faults. The Declaration of Independence is, in one sense, a brief anthology of the political faults and failures of the king of England.

It is, perhaps, stretching a point to call Thomas Jefferson's famous catalogue of British injuries and usurpations an anthology. He has, in the Declaration, moved well beyond the stage of simply collecting data and reached the point where it is possible to begin detecting trends, identifying causes, and drawing conclusions. Items in a collection invariably contribute to just such a general impression: of the mother wit of one's Connecticut neighbors, of the complexity and civility of Indian culture, of the broad moral harmony that God expresses through natural things. The epigraph from Joseph Addison's celebrated play *Cato* that Benjamin Franklin chooses for his little book of ethical instruction affirms what most eighteenth-century English and American writers firmly believed: that nature "cries aloud / Thro' all her Works" a consistent message of delight in the virtue and happiness of living creatures (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 474). This perception of the latent affinity between ethics and natural science lies behind the language of Jefferson's famous preamble to the Declaration – and behind its revolutionary corollary as well: that whatever thwarts human happiness is a crime against the laws of nature's God.

Jefferson and his colleagues in the Continental Congress were determined to show that their resistance to British rule was founded on reason and experience rather than passion. Like prudent students of affairs, they had collected over the past decade a "long train of abuses" as specimens of the colonial policy emanating from London and found themselves forced to conclude that the collection (as Jefferson put it) "evinces a design." A single malevolent intelligence appeared to be orchestrating these seemingly disconnected acts. In eighteenth-century political shorthand that malevolent intelligence belonged to George III, though Jefferson's original draft implied in its closing words that the English people and Parliament as well were deeply implicated in the pattern of oppression (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 525–9)

Passion was certainly a key element in the decision to resist the English king. Congress carefully revised the Declaration's original text as thoroughly as they could in part to mute the level of sheer outrage that Jefferson's draft contained, but no one hearing or reading the final lines of Philip Freneau's 1775 commencement poem at Princeton could mistake the depth of colonial bitterness at what Americans perceived, even from the beginning of the war, to be a pattern of English butchery (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 566–7). "O ye that love mankind!" Thomas Paine famously cried at the close of *Common Sense*, "Ye that dare oppose not only the tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth!" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 523). The members of the Continental Congress, a few months later, would finally decline to indulge in such a melodramatic display, but in preparing to announce their formal breach with the

English government, they shared a similar concern with Paine. What was the proper balance to strike between appeals to the mind and appeals to the heart? How could a writer best combine the lucid forces of common sense with the impassioned energy of a common cause?

As students of the Great Awakening have long recognized, eighteenth-century Americans were only too familiar with the danger and the lure of emotional excess in public life. Their churches were their first political schools. Protestant revivals throughout New England, beginning in the 1730s, polarized entire communities into pro-revival and anti-revival factions, New Lights and Old Lights, as they quickly came to be called. The divisions often coincided with those of class and social status, reminding colonial authorities of the profoundly democratic implications of their subversive faith. Jonathan Edwards is the most famous advocate (among the clerical establishment at least) of the role of powerful emotion in the search for personal salvation, but even Edwards in his sermons and his histories sought out language that described these explosive psychological forces in oddly cool terms. The problem of containment, as well as the challenges of incitement, preoccupied his attention.

The political agitations of the revolutionary period witnessed the same complex negotiation between deep feelings and the discipline of reason – a negotiation rather than a struggle, because virtually every eighteenth-century writer and thinker, English or American, viewed human character as a hybrid of antithetical aptitudes: impetuosity and deliberation, feeling and thinking, passion and reason. The psychological consensus of the age is beautifully preserved in the heroic couplets of Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man*, where Reason's "comparing balance" helps restrain the lawless flames of self-love, steering between the equally fatal dangers of intellectual paralysis and suicidal egotism. "Avoid Extremes," Benjamin Franklin cautioned himself in the motto that he wrote to accompany the virtue of Moderation in his program of moral training: "Forbear resenting Injuries so much as you think they deserve." This advice is carefully phrased to capture perfectly Franklin's ethical loyalties without disguising his considerable respect for, and familiarity with, the inextinguishable fires of resentment.

The Continental Congress apparently took Franklin's advice to heart. They deleted from the text of the Declaration of Independence the most extreme passages that Jefferson wrote and restrained others, forbearing to resent many injuries as they deserved to be resented, and forbearing even to mention many others. Jefferson's painfully contorted attempt to blame American slavery on the commercial policies of the English king disappears from the document's final version, though Jefferson himself made sure that the excised language had an afterlife in his autobiography. His unexcised draft forms a particularly striking instance of how guilt and self-interest can warp even the most acute and idealistic intelligence – a specimen of the human capacity for paradox that still has much to teach. The "sentiments of men," Jefferson recognized, "are known not only by what they receive, but what they reject also" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 525). These words seem calculated to raise a critical question: how completely could the conscious mind expect to control such

momentous choices? Our powers of reception are limited. Not all truths – perhaps not even the most vital ones – are equally self-evident.

The same, haunting paradox is vividly preserved in Cotton Mather's "The Negro Christianized," published seventy years before the Declaration of Independence. Don't be alarmed at the implications of baptizing your slaves, Mather assures his nervous white readers. The Bible, along with the traditions of canon and English law, will protect your investment in human flesh. A few sentences earlier, however, Mather had scoffed at the racist assumptions of those who continued to believe that the color of their slaves' skin was a mark of inferiority: "Their Complexion sometimes is made an Argument, why nothing should be done for them. A Gay sort of argument! As if the great God went by the Complexion of Men, in His Favours to them! As if none but Whites might hope to be Favoured and Accepted with God! . . . Away with such Trifles. The God who looks on the Heart, is not moved by the colour of the Skin" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 336).

In sweeping away such trifles of ignorance, Mather sweeps away the basis of all the imperial inhumanity of his time. Boston's nervous slave-holders were right. Baptism does indeed imply freedom. How could Mather be blind to the revolutionary implications of his own most stirring words? A long tradition of religious and secular thought would immediately reply: how could he be other than blind? Calvinist and non-Calvinist alike, in eighteenth-century America, agreed that to be human is to be blind – a truth that explains why men as different as Roger Williams and Benjamin Franklin directed prayers to the Father of Lights.

Following the progression of his own moral and spiritual illumination, Mather's Boston neighbor Samuel Sewall was among the first Americans to repudiate slavery, within five years of his act of public remorse for his role in the Salem witchcraft trials. Sewall grounded the arguments that he offered in *The Selling of Joseph* (1700) firmly upon Paul's assertion in the Book of Acts that God "hath made of One Blood, all Nations of Men, for to dwell on all the face of the Earth" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 324). Cotton Mather would cite the same verse six years later in the pages of "The Negro Christianized." Olaudah Equiano quoted it too at the end of the first chapter in his *Interesting Narrative*; readers will need to consult the complete text of Equiano's book to find it. Lemuel Haynes, an African American New Light minister who preached in Vermont from the Revolution through the second decade of the nineteenth century, incorporated Paul's momentous words into the manuscript that he entitled "Liberty Further Extended," which may have been written in the same year as the Declaration of Independence (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 575). A secularized form of the verse even appears in *Alcuin*, a dialogue on the rights of women that Charles Brockden Brown published in Philadelphia in 1798. "Men and women are the partakers of the same nature," Brown's forceful Mrs. Carter coolly remarks: "They are rational beings, and, as such, the same principles of truth and equity must be applicable to both" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 594).

Perhaps only an imperial age, with the generous scope that it offered to the best and the worst attributes of human nature, was equipped to grasp the full, liberating force

of this inconspicuous feature in its religious heritage. In putting together the pieces of the American eighteenth century, one repeatedly confronts the fluid mixture of wisdom and ignorance, nobility and venality, that mark its legacy. Writer after writer submits this blend of triumph and of failure to the judgment of a candid world. Their willingness to do so reflects the broad conviction of their time that no setbacks or disasters, however deeply rooted in individual or collective guilt, could permanently blight the progress of a people that had caught the rising tide of reason and faith.

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20
The Transoceanic Emergence of American "Postcolonial" Identities

Gesa Mackenthun

> Would it be ridiculous to consider our lived history as a steadily advancing neurosis? To see the Slave Trade as a traumatic shock, our relocation (in the new land) as a repressive phase, slavery as the period of latency, "emancipation" . . . as reactivation, our everyday fantasies as symptoms, and even our horror of "returning to those things of the past" as a possible manifestation of the neurotic's fear of his past? . . . Which psychiatrist could state the problematics of such a parallel? None. History has its dimension of the unexplorable, at the edge of which we wander, our eyes wide open.
>
> Edouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*

The formation of cultural and personal identities in post-Revolutionary America was invariably a matter of negotiation. As this essay tries to demonstrate, identities were often forged out of the experience of cultural heterogeneity and geographical – which in the Age of Sail included oceanic – displacement. In becoming "landed" and national, cultural identities necessarily underwent a process of historical reinvention, which included an element of historical amnesia. Early American cultural identity, which may be called "postcolonial" only in an oxymoronic way (as combining national "awakening" with the activities of imperial expansion and a slavery-based economy), was the product of a massive, yet embattled, invention of a tradition, an ideological alignment of the colonial past to serve the needs of the future. As Stuart Hall reminds us, postcolonial identity, like any identity,

> is a matter of "becoming" as well as of "being." It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history, and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialist past, they are subject to the continuous "play" of history, culture, and power. Far from being grounded in a mere "recovery" of the past, which is

> waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past (Hall 1990: 225).

Without doubt, the nationalistic poets of the Early Republic were driven by a passionate desire to construct just such an essentialist past as the postcolonial critic rejects, trying to subject what Hall calls the "play of history" to a linear and providential narrative of national emergence. But, more importantly, they were countered by other narratives which articulate the difficulties involved in such national self-invention. This essay wants to explore a few representatives of the latter group – in particular, Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*, Royall Tyler's *Algerine Captive*, and Charles Brockden Brown's *Arthur Mervyn* – putting special emphasis on the way they simultaneously voice and put under erasure the transoceanic entanglements of the post-Revolutionary United States.

Michael Gilmore has argued that American culture of the Early Republic "reenacted . . . the transition in Western civilization from the epic to the novel" – that is, from a predominantly collective literary mode to a subjective and private one. The early American novel, Gilmore writes, must be seen as inhabiting the borderline between these two literary forms, between a commitment to collective interests and the private "display of subjectivity" characteristic of the Romantic novel (Gilmore 1994: 544, 545). Provided that these two literary forms, the epic and the novel, are not regarded as consecutive but as simultaneous developments, they allow us to distinguish between different discursive strands within early American literary culture, involving quite different ideological programs.

Three of the best-known authors of the national epic form are Joel Barlow, Timothy Dwight, and Philip Freneau. Together with Hugh Henry Brackenridge, Freneau wrote *A Poem on the Rising Glory of America* (1772), an epic poem that gives a historical account of the discovery and the settlement of America and celebrates the deeds of the European explorers and colonizers from Columbus to the present. A shorter version of this can be found in Freneau's poem "On the Emigration to America and Peopling the Western Country" (1785), which recounts the adventures of the knight-errant Palemon, thereby imitating the chivalric style of Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590–6). Like the Redcrosse Knight and others, Palemon sets out in search of a better world to liberate himself and his people from the "despotic" power of Europe. Freneau secularizes the trope of the "errand into the wilderness" in that Palemon's quest is directed at bringing civilization, enlightenment, and progress to the American wilderness and putting an end to the idle wastage of America's natural resources. Freneau's lyrical "I" then looks into the future, hoping for a time when "man shall man no longer crush," when "Reason shall enforce her sway," and when only the African will still complain about his as yet unbroken chains (Freneau 1998).

Philip Freneau, who traveled widely and spent two years as a sea captain in the Caribbean, also registers the dark side of his optimistic vision, in poems such as "To Sir Toby" (1792), a very eloquent condemnation of the violence practiced against slaves on

West Indian sugar plantations, and "The Indian Burying Ground" (1787), a sentimental evocation of the myth of the Vanishing American. A more extensive epic was composed by Joel Barlow with *The Vision of Columbus* (1787), later revised and expanded into *The Columbiad* (1807), which presents the conquest of America (north and south) as the fulfillment of Mosaic prophecy. Like Freneau, Barlow ends with a vision of the future which regards America as the vanguard of the scientific, intellectual, and commercial progress of the world, which will culminate in the "assimilation and final harmony of all languages" and "a general council of all nations assembled to establish the political harmony of mankind" (Barlow 1825: 238). Finally, Timothy Dwight imagines how the industry of the settlers will convert America from a dark and dreary chaos into a beacon of commerce and enlightenment in *America, or, A Poem on the Settlement of the British Colonies* (1780) – to be followed up in 1794 by his pastoral epic *Greenfield Hill*. *America* ends with the well-known prophecy of America's imperial future:

> Hail Land of light and joy! thy power shall grow
> Far as the seas, which round thy regions flow;
> Through earth's wide realms thy glory shall extend,
> And savage nations at thy scepter bend.
> Around the frozen shores thy sons shall sail,
> Or stretch their canvas to the Asian gale,
> Or, like Columbus, steer their course unknown,
> Beyond the regions of the flaming zone,
> To worlds unfound beneath the southern pole,
> Whose native hears Antarctic oceans roll;
> Where artless Nature rules with peaceful sway,
> And where no ship e'er stemm'd the untry'd way.
> (Dwight 1969: 11)

Eventually, America will reap all the wealth from other countries, especially India, and establish peace to all nations. Then, Dwight goes on, "a heavenly kingdom shall descend, / And Light and Glory through the world extend," and the poem ends with a biblical vision of Christ's second coming.

All of these epic poems make use of an apocalyptic teleology in celebrating the prospects of the new nation. They all resort to the mythical narrative of *translatio imperii et studi* as the ideological master narrative that has accompanied European expansion since Roman times and was successively adopted by all imperial powers in Europe before it became the dominant trope in early American political discourse (and has remained so until today). In depicting historical processes in the language of heroic narrative, these romantic epic poems partake in the production of a national mythology that necessarily has to silence the concerns of those populations on whose backs the providential narrative is enacted: the dispossession of Native Americans is regretted as an unavoidable collateral damage of predetermined historical fulfillment, while only Freneau uneasily remarks the as-yet unfulfilled emancipation of African slaves.

I propose to view the emergence of American novelistic writing against the background of this early nationalistic epic discourse and to use the "dialogic" and "postcolonial" terminology of Mikhail Bakhtin and Edouard Glissant in characterizing the difference between the two modes. Bakhtin, differentiating between the discourses of epic and novel, emphasizes the "polyglot" mode of the novelistic form, whose historical emergence coincides with the capitalist expansion of Europe:

> The world becomes polyglot, once and for all and irreversibly. The period of national languages, coexisting but closed and deaf to each other, comes to an end... In this actively polyglot world, completely new relationships are established between language and its object (that is, the real world) – and this is fraught with enormous consequences for all the already completed genres that had been formed during eras of closed and deaf monoglossia. In contrast to other major genres, the novel emerged and matured precisely when intense activization of external and internal polyglossia was at the peak of its activity; this is its native element. (Bakhtin 1981: 12)

Glissant, certainly aware of Bakhtin's work but borrowing his terminology from Deleuze and Guattari, gives his own version of the dichotomy between monoglossia and poly- or heteroglossia. Writing about two opposed historiographical paradigms, he distinguishes between the *racine* logic of a unified history and the *rhizomatic* logic of a heterogeneous and hybrid view of history and identity. The "rooted" identity of Western discourse, Glissant states, is unique, it is like the trunk of a tree which absorbs or destroys everything around it (Glissant 1990: 23: "la racine est unique, c'est une souche qui prend tout sur elle et tue alentour"). Speaking of identity in the Caribbean, by comparison, Glissant emphasizes its "subterranean convergence" of diverse histories. Both of these modes – the monoglossic or "rooted" epic mode and the heteroglossic or "rhizomatic" mode of the novel – coexisted in the discursive formation of the Early Republic, and they competed for ideological leadership as American foundational fictions (see Sommer 1990).

Charles Brockden Brown's novel *Edgar Huntly* may serve as an example of how the intention to express nationalistic concerns in the novel form is thwarted by the inner dynamics of that form. Promising to exchange the gothic castles of Europe for the horrors of the Indian frontier, Brown is ultimately unable to ban the ghosts of Europe from his narrative of origins in the American wilderness. After all, Huntly's mythical rebirth is the direct result of his recognition that his fiancée's money has apparently been embezzled from the transatlantic merchant Weymouth: it is after Weymouth's revelation of these facts that Huntly begins to sleepwalk into the wilderness, where his behavior gradually assimilates to that of his "savage" antagonists Clithero and the Indians. While the archetypal dimension of Edgar's rebirth in the wilderness through acts of chivalry and blood sacrifice is too obvious to be denied, the novel just as obviously denies the feasibility of Edgar's experience as an American national myth. As Carrol Smith-Rosenberg suggests, the figure of Edgar Huntly fuses two contradictory subject positions: that of the "victorious postcolonial and the colonizer, heir to

Britain's imperial venture in North America. Facing east, Euro-Americans positioned themselves as Sons of Liberty; facing west, they were the progenitors of a vast new empire" – an empire that was a mere continuation of British colonial imperial designs (Smith-Rosenberg 1993: 495). In other words, Edgar's self-division illustrates the ambivalence of American postcoloniality: the attempt of Euro-Americans to immerse themselves in the land, which was continuously frustrated by the land claims of a previous indigenous population, and Euro-America's continuing economic dependency on Europe.

Weymouth's claim remains a loose end in the novel: we never learn what became of him. Its obvious function, in terms of plot, is to cut loose Edgar's savage instincts. Edgar's violent rebirth is the reaction to the embarrassing reminder that his envisioned future existence, and, allegorically, the existence of the United States as a nation, will be purchased with embezzled (i.e., mysteriously "inherited") Atlantic capital. The transatlantic dependencies of the Early Republic are further illustrated in the illustrious person of Sarsefield who, after the deconstruction of Huntly as an identification figure, remains the only authority in the novel. But Sarsefield simultaneously represents the archetypal *colonial* personality; his travels and military engagements in diverse colonial battlefields indeed span the whole world of the British and American empire.

In spite of his optimistic intentions, then, Brown's plot took a less "epic" direction than would have been useful for a nationalistic narrative. *Edgar Huntly*'s dialectics of colonial violence and postcolonial amnesia demonstrate that the novel genre, at least in the United States, is far from complicit in the production of collective national mentalities (cf. Brennan 1990: 49). If anything, early American novels suggest that identity, whether individual or collective, was a very volatile thing indeed in the period of economic and intellectual transition we refer to as the Early Republic.

Like *Edgar Huntly*, Royall Tyler's novel *The Algerine Captive* (1797) features an itinerant protagonist in search of an identity and a home. And like Brown's novel, Tyler's is not a fully developed *Bildungsroman*; in both the question of identity seems as uncertain at the end as it was at the beginning. *The Algerine Captive* spells out some aspects of the historical context of the Early Republic which *Edgar Huntly* (and, as we shall see, *Arthur Mervyn*) banish to the margins of novelistic action. By coupling the domestic satire of the first part with Updike Underhill's transatlantic pursuits and Mediterranean captivity, Tyler reminds us of the widely spun maritime trade network of which the United States formed a part in spite of British attempts to limit their access to foreign markets. After all, America's "primary frontier," as Thomas Philbrick writes, was maritime, not continental, and Henry Nash Smith, whose *Virgin Land* was among the pioneers of the critical exploration of the continental frontier, knows that in the early national period, the United States faced two conceptions of American Empire, one consisting of a "command of the sea" and the other of the notion of a settlement empire (Philbrick: 1989; Smith 1978: 12). Philbrick wonderfully captures the extent to which American shipping would develop in the first decades of the nineteenth century:

> To the West Indian, Baltic, and Mediterranean trades, established in colonial days, and the Northwest and Canton trades, first explored in the 1780s, were added new ventures. Massachusetts vessels carried spices from the Fiji Islands, Madagascar, and Zanzibar, rubber from Brazil, sandalwood from Hawaii, and hides from California in exchange for nails, firearms, blankets, rum, and even that most abundant of Yankee commodities, ice, which, cut from Fresh Pond in Cambridge and Walden in Concord, enabled the priest of Brahma to drink at Thoreau's well. (Philbrick 1961: 2)

The perception of American history in purely continental terms has certainly occluded the fact that in the first fifty years of its existence, the United States was one of the leading maritime nations of the world. The same blindness to the importance of America's maritime economy has also caused the effacement of the United States' involvement in the transatlantic slave trade, which was a considerable economic factor until its declaration as piracy but remained a major source of income for American citizens and shipbuilding industries even until the Civil War.

Tyler's novel evokes this neglected chapter of American history – as would Cooper's *Red Rover*, Melville's *Benito Cereno*, and Delany's *Blake* in the nineteenth century – and it also registers the need to banish the issue of slavery from America's nationalistic narrative. Divided into two parts, the domestic section ends with the protagonist Updike Underhill's voyage as surgeon on a slaveship to Africa. Tyler reserved two full chapters to a description of the situation on board and Updike's moral rebellion against the practices of the slave trade. Confronting the captain with the demands formulated as a result of the British parliamentary investigation of 1788, Underhill asks for a "looser" packing of slaves and for a healthier diet and better hygiene. The captain of course sneers at this as "some *Yankee nonsense about humanity*" (Tyler 1970: 109). Underhill ends his account of the slaveship horrors by expressing his deep regret about his complicity in the trade, his hope that his own subsequent captivity in the hands of the Algerian Dey may "expiate for the inhumanity I was necessitated to exercise towards these, MY BRETHREN OF THE HUMAN RACE" (ibid: 110), and his resolve to dedicate "every moment of my life . . . to preaching against this detestable commerce":

> I will fly to our fellow citizens in the southern states; I will, on my knees, conjure them, in the name of humanity, to abolish a traffic which causes it to bleed in every pore . . . I will conjure them . . . to cease to deprive their fellow creatures of that freedom which their writers, their orators, representatives, senators, and even their constitutions of government have declared to be the unalienable birthright of man. (Ibid: 118)

However, by the end of his tale, as Updike finds himself happily reconciled with his nation and family, his abolitionist designs have evaporated from his consciousness. Having survived the vicissitudes of "slavery" himself, Updike returns to his homeland a newly born republican, and he entreats his fellow citizens to keep "union among ourselves. For to no nation besides the United States can that ancient saying be more emphatically applied; BY UNITING WE STAND, BY DIVIDING WE FALL" (ibid: 224).

Tyler's narrative of reconciliation and prodigal return counters the shortcomings and contradictions of postcolonial America with an account of foreign bondage and thereby reiterates a more general discursive practice in the late colonial and early post-Revolutionary period, whose political rhetoric concentrated on domestic issues while keeping its continuing transatlantic involvement at bay. The novel, by engaging a double semantics of slavery – the forced transportation of Africans to American plantations is qualitatively equated to the capture, and holding for a ransom, of European sailors by the Barbary "pirates" – dramatizes the emergence of an American national identity through amnesia. The fact that Tyler was highly aware of the problem of slavery as a Supreme Court judge to the state of Vermont testifies to the discursive pressure to which his text yielded. Subject to both the ideological pressure for union and the formal pressure for narrative closure, Tyler's text ends by disarticulating the progressive Herderian cultural relativism of its orientalist middle section. Tyler's choice of national union over anti-slavery division recalls Frenau's helpless recognition of African slavery and Indian dispossession as unavoidable ills accompanying imperial progress just as it anticipates similar narrative solutions in the fictions of Cooper and Poe.

Of course, it may be argued, as Edward Watts has been doing, that the "amnesiac" narrative solution of *The Algerine Captive* is not the result of Tyler's ideological dilemma but rather an intentional authorial attempt to "decolonize" the reader by exposing him to a non-reflective protagonist whose transformation from ignorant country bumpkin to federal citizen remains ultimately unconvincing (Watts 1998: 92). This reading, however, seems to borrow the terminology of postcolonial theory for expressing a rather modernist, and therefore anachronistic, relationship between author and reader. It presents Tyler's hybrid text engaged in a fully developed novelistic discourse more typical of, say, Herman Melville's educational performance on the reader in *Benito Cereno* (which, we should remember, did not reach the "incompetent" readers of the mid-nineteenth century and is only beginning to be appreciated by professional readers of our own period). But if Tyler's novel neither sets out nor succeeds in "decolonizing" the reader (as I would claim), how can it then be viewed within the critical coordinates of postcolonial theory?

Metaphorical applications apart, it seems useful to me to distinguish between three aspects of the postcolonial study of American history and literature in the period between the national emergence of the United States and the Civil War. The most obvious aspect of American postcoloniality is that proposed by the authors of *The Empire Writes Back* and followed ever since by a number of critics, Lawrence Buell and Edward Watts among them: they view the Early Republic as postcolonial *vis-à-vis* England as a former colony struggling for intellectual emancipation from the mother country. But this emphasis on America's mental decolonization runs the risk of becoming indistinguishable from earlier Emersonian calls for national intelletucal independence and of eliminating the issues of slavery and Indian dispossession from its field of vision. These latter facts of American history have for the past ten or twenty years come into view of "New Americanist" critics intent on uncovering American literature's involvement with issues of slavery, race, and empire. Amy

Kaplan's call for transgressing the geopolitical borders of the nation is being heeded by a growing number of scholars (Kaplan 1993: 15; see, for example, Schueller and Watts 2003). One of the important insights of these studies is the recognition of the ambivalence of American postcoloniality – its oxymoronic combination of political independence from England with a continuation of England's imperial politics of westward expansion (see Hulme 1995). Yet a third dimension to the study of early American culture under the aspects of postcoloniality and transnationality is opened up by taking account of the continuing entanglement of the United States in the slave-based economy of the Atlantic ocean. This kind of perspective leaves the confines of both nation and continent and assesses the literary production of the United States from a transnational and transoceanic vantage point. It is this third postcolonial perspective to which novels like *The Algerine Captive* respond, both by acknowledging the fact of America's systemic involvement in the colonial Atlantic economy and articulating the need to deny it.

The critical practice of American studies scholarship has until recently largely suppressed this transoceanic component of early United States fiction. This means, first, that well-known texts such as *Edgar Huntly* were read according to the logic of national identity formation and not as ideologically and generically hybrid products of a transitional period; and secondly, that the national canon, guided by a desire to make early American novels compete with those of contemporary Europe, has widely ignored generically "impure" texts which can be called proto-novelistic (like Tyler's *Algerine Captive*), or non-novelistic texts that nevertheless make use of fictional strategies (see Drexler 2003 on the little-known novels of Leonora Sansay, which he juxtaposes with Charles Brockden Brown's political writings).

Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* (1789) is a good example for the formation of a transoceanic identity that escapes the logical grid of nationalist and continentalist canons. The critical evaluation of this text has to take account of Vincent Carretta's recent discovery of the fact that Equiano was almost certainly born in North America but that he strategically adopted an African, or "Ethiopian" identity in an effort to endow his account with authenticity and credibility. Published eight years prior to *The Algerine Captive*, the *Interesting Narrative* (whose first American edition appeared in 1791) can be regarded as one of the intertexts of Tyler's novel – together with such novels as *Robinson Crusoe* and Voltaire's *Candide*, as well as various documentary reports on the transatlantic slave trade such as the surgeon Alexander Falconbridge's *Account of the Slave Trade on the Coast of Africa* (1788). All of these texts provide Tyler with cultural materials – like Crusoe, Underhill is of a "roving" disposition, hires on a slaver, and subsequently forgets or represses his complicity in the "odious commerce" in favor of searching for a unified self; like Falconbridge, he gives a highly descriptive account of the conditions on slaveships where he works as a surgeon; and like Candide, he is happy, after many adventurous peregrinations, to content himself with American liberalism as the "best of all worlds."

As a model of identity formation, however, *The Algerine Captive* finds its strongest counterpart in Equiano's autobiographical narrative, which is only superficially a

picaresque adventure tale like Underhill's. As Martin Christadler maintains, Equiano's wanderings are insufficiently grasped by the picaresque model, and he argues that the seemingly voluntary and naive succession of episodes of Equiano's text does not express the wavering perspective of a protean consciousness ready to assimilate itself to all situations, but that it rather testifies to the formation of a critical and enlightened personality who is conscious of his cultural liminality – of acting under coercive ideological pressures which he cannot control (Christadler 1999: 206–7). This enlightened intellectuality, we might say, was an oceanic one, as Equiano remained out at sea both physically and mentally for most of his life. It is the relative freedom of shipboard life which endows the "Black Jack" with an uncommon self-confidence, which allows him to argue with his masters and to acquire a knowledge of writing and of navigation, which entitles him to the status of "captain" after saving a ship in a storm, and which enables him to acquire his freedom. Passing as a black Englishman, he also constantly passes, as Marion Rust emphasizes, through the oceans that divide one geographic homeland from another: "Water becomes the most important place in his *Interesting Narrative* not only because that's where he spends the most time but also because it's where he obtains the greatest authority" (Rust 1996: 23). In the world on shore, however, which is dominated by the discourses of nations, of ethnic difference, and of social status, Equiano's identity can only be contradictory – a fate which he shares with other Black Jacks like Briton Hammon (for a more extensive treatment of these texts, see Mackenthun 2004).

Benjamin Franklin, the founding father of the United States, and Olaudah Equiano, the founding father of a Black Atlantic consciousness, sat down at the same time to write their autobiographies in 1788. While Franklin's narrative advanced to become the mythical master narrative of the American Dream, Equiano's text reminds us of that part of American history that was successfully blotted out from American intellectual historiography – the black presence which, as Toni Morrison argues, had to be forgotten in order for the narrative of national independence and individualism to take shape.

The oceanic setting of the emergence of Equiano's protean, or liminal, identity evokes Paul Gilroy's identification of the transatlantic slave trade as the origin of the "rhizomorphic, fractal structure of the transcultural, international formation" which he calls the Black Atlantic (Gilroy 1993: 4). Indeed, Glissant's use of the rhizome as a metaphor for Caribbean identity (referred to above) similarly arises from an acknowledgment of America's Black Atlantic past. His idea of the Caribbean as the arena for the subterranean convergences of diverse histories is indebted to a remark of Edward Brathwaite's, who had referred to the unifying element of Caribbean history as "submarine." This reminds Glissant of

> all those Africans weighed down with ball and chain and thrown overboard whenever a slave ship was pursued by enemy vessels and felt too weak to put up a fight. *They sowed in the depths the seeds of an invisible presence.* And so transversality, and not the universal transcendence of the sublime, has come to light . . . We are the roots of a cross-cultural

> relationship. Submarine roots: that is floating free, not fixed in one position in some primordial spot, but extending in all directions in our world through its network of branches. (Glissant 1989: 66–7)

Glissant's definition of Caribbean history and identity as algoid, the submarine equivalent of the rhizome, directly evokes the transoceanic travels of Olaudah Equiano and others, whose identity is never fixed but always "floating," provisional, and relational. In his *Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings and Surprizing Deliverance of Briton Hammon* (1760), for example, Hammon, the American "Negro Man" whose name combines an English with a biblical African identity, shows his identity to be relative to the circumstances he encounters: he is one of "the people" when the crew of his first ship protests against the captain's materialism, he is a *civilized* man when encountering his Native American captors, he adopts an *English* identity when escaping from Cuban captivity, offers his services as a *cook* to the African slaver, and is happy about his miraculous reunion with his American master and to reenter his role as *slave* in New England (Hammon 1998).

While Gilroy, Brathwaite, and Glissant use the image of the ship in order to "rethink," as Gilroy writes, "modernity via the history of the Black Atlantic and the African diaspora into the Western hemisphere" (Gilroy 1993: 17), I want to make a more modest proposal – to rethink the emergence of the American novel through the history of America's transnational entanglement with the slave-based Atlantic economy (for a full development of this argument, see Mackenthun 2004). This entanglement was explicitly registered in a number of early nineteenth-century and antebellum texts – from Cooper's *Red Rover* to Poe's *Arthur Gordon Pym* (not to speak of the most obvious cases, Melville's *Benito Cereno*, Douglass' "Heroic Slave," or Delany's *Blake*). But it has also left its mark upon Brown's novel *Arthur Mervyn, or, Memoirs of the Year 1793* (1799–1800), which uses the powerful imagery of yellow fever infection to express the anxiety aroused in the United States by the transformation of the colonial economy in the Caribbean.

Arthur Mervyn's migrations are similarly "rhizomorphic" as Olaudah Equiano's, but while Equiano's identity is formed and tested on shipboard against a pervasive "culture" that denied subjectivity to people like him, Mervyn drifts through a labyrinthine cityscape infested with speculative fever and the black vomit which threaten to dissolve his physical and mental stability. The novel is set in Philadelphia, which, as Olaudah Equiano's narrative testifies, functioned as the most important colonial entrepôt between the Caribbean colonies and England in the eighteenth century. In fact the West Indian trade had been Philadelphia's economic stronghold ever since the 1690s (Heinrich 1997: 9). The city's commercial ties with the Caribbean endured even the severest British trade prohibitions. As the largest harbor town of the United States, Philadelphia retained this function into the nineteenth century.

The crime and mystery plot of *Arthur Mervyn* is crucially determined by these transoceanic trade relations. It revolves around various monetary transactions between

Caribbean colonies and the United States. The unscrupulous merchant Thetford plans to deprive the villain Welbeck of his money by convincing him to buy and equip a ship with a cargo to be sold in the West Indies in defiance of the British Navigation Laws which prohibited such trade schemes. Thetford assures Welbeck that even if the ship ended up a British prize, the insurance would cover the loss. But instead of helping the unsuspecting and unexperienced Welbeck to make some cash in a risky business scheme, Thetford had planned right from the beginning to have the ship confiscated by the British and to subsequently buy it back himself at an auction for a fifth or tenth of its original value (Brown 1962: 91–2, 130). Just as Arthur enters Welbeck's service as a scrivener, Welbeck is informed by Thetford that his ship has been captured by an English privateer under a pretense of carrying contraband:

> Two French mulattoes had, after much solicitation, and the most solemn promises to carry with them no article which the laws of war decree to be contraband, obtained passage in the vessel. She was speedily encountered by a privateer, by whom every receptacle was ransacked. In a chest, belonging to the Frenchmen, and which they had affirmed to contain nothing but their clothes, were found two sabres, and other accoutrements of an officer of cavalry. Under this pretence, the vessel was captured and condemned, and this was a cause of forfeiture, which had not been provided against in the contract of insurance. (Ibid: 96)

The messenger of this information is the sea captain Watson, who has just returned from "St. Domingo" and brings news from other Caribbean colonies as well (before being murdered by Welbeck). He carries on his body a large sum of money stemming from the sale of a Jamaica plantation – money which he now wants to deliver to its rightful owners, the Maurice family, who had fled from the British colony because "the Island [was] becoming hourly more exposed to the chances of war and revolution" (ibid: 230). It seems that Watson has toured the most dangerous places in the Caribbean; while Jamaica was frequently shaken by slave and Maroon revolts, "St. Domingo" of course directly relates the action of the novel to Toussaint L'Ouverture's revolution in Haiti, which coincided with the yellow fever epidemic of the early 1790s.

The link between colonial capital and infection becomes most obvious in the story of Vincentio Lodi, the son of an Italian-born plantation owner from Guadeloupe, whom Welbeck encountered at the harbor of Philadelphia. Lodi, we learn, had just disembarked from a West India ship and is dying of the yellow fever. Before his death, he entrusts Welbeck with $20,000 in banknotes, asking him to deliver the money to his sister Clemenza, and with an Italian manuscript, written by his father (ibid: 87–8). As it later turns out, the manuscript contains, *mise-en-abyme* fashion, both an Italian rogue story about a secret treasure and another $20,000.

But fever is not the reason for Lodi's flight from Guadeloupe. He rather carries out his father's wish to sell the plantation and emigrate to the United States because of the political uncertainty in the French colony. On his arrival from Italy Lodi had found

his father killed by a rebellious slave, who revenged himself for having been promised but later denied his manumission (ibid: 88). Lodi's story, then, finds its structural equivalent in the story of the Maurice family, who likewise sold their plantation to escape from the explosive social climate. The center of rebellion was of course Saint-Domingue, the destination of the mulatto travelers and the concealed weapons on Welbeck's ship. As it turns out, both Welbeck and Thetford are ruined by the scheme: Welbeck is apprehended by his creditors and thrown into debtor's prison, where he dies, and Thetford succumbs to the yellow fever without having completed his fraudulent business scheme.

As these subplots (which determine the action of the main plot) show, the fortunes of the characters of the novel are deeply implicated in the (post)colonial Atlantic world and its multiple relocations of people and property. More precisely, the actions of the novel are largely determined by the ups and downs of the slave-based Atlantic economy. Welbeck's initial misfortune, which stems from the ruin of his father, is a casualty of that very same economy, given the fact that most Liverpool merchants in that age were in one or another way involved in the Atlantic slave trade – a trade which, as it grew more specialized and came to be concentrated in the hands of a few wealthy merchant firms able to endure risky long-term ventures, brought financial loss and ruin to many a petty private slaver. Lodi and the Maurices react to the decline of the British colonial system, owing at least in part to American independence, the British infringements of American shipping in the Atlantic and the Caribbean, and the increase of slave revolts in the West Indies. Though relegated to the margin of the narrative, these Atlantic and Caribbean destinies, as Teresa Goddu and Bill Christophersen have also suggested, are central to the plot of *Arthur Mervyn* and its very peculiar dramatization of America's domestic withdrawal from the slave-based world of the Atlantic: "While the novel consistently displaces discussion of the nation's domestic economy onto the international scene," Goddu writes, "the specter of slavery lurks in every economic transaction. Money from slave societies ubiquitously circulates to America, revealing America's international and domestic economic dependence on slavery" (Goddu 1997: 37).

The specter of slavery invades Arthur's world in the shape of various blacks and mulattoes he meets in coaches and empty mansions. While the daylight encounter of a multiethnic group of travel companions causes more mirth than fear, Arthur's confusion of his mirror image with that of a black cart driver throws him into a fit of paranoia. Instead of arriving at a stable identity, Arthur is in constant danger of losing his sense of self to his dark surroundings. The abnormal psychology of Mervyn and others, as Steven Watts argues, is indicative of the fluidity of identity at the core of liberal society – not merely a "bizarre Gothic excess" but a reflection of "the sense of danger accompanying the disintegration of an older order and the emergence of a new one" (Watts 1994: 191–2).

Arthur's main duty consists of delivering the masterless money to its rightful owners, but in fact he finds himself drawn deeper and deeper into the complicated web of intrigue, embezzlement, and faked identities – an atmosphere of inauthenticity

which begins to "infect" Arthur himself. The plot of Brown's novel, with the circular, episodic, and repetitive movements of its protagonist, resembles the shuttling movements of ships along the trade routes of the Atlantic world. It is a good example for how the modern novel, duplicating geopolitical developments, emerges from the restrictions of the epic mode in order to become polyglot and heteroglossic.

It has often been argued that Brown's feverishly written novel successively dramatizes the two contending models for the economic organization of the new republic, first by taking a Jeffersonian position in showing the metropolis as a site infested by falsity and economic uncertainty (the equivalent of the miasma theory of infection), and, in the second volume, by suggesting that the world of the countryside, far from fulfilling the Jeffersonian ideal of a morally healthy climate, is no exception to the rule of materialistic desire (Gilmore 1994: 652–60). Brown's novelistic – indeed "gothic" – discourse, in translating the themes of financial greed and racial fear into the language of contagious disease, counters the optimism of national mythical models with the themes of amnesia and anxiety. The text suggests that a narrative of national identity cannot remain silent about its Atlantic imbrications and entanglements, which creep into the national economy just like the yellow fever, originally imported from Africa, creeps into the colonial mansions of Philadelphia. Faced with such a dilemma, Arthur ends his dubious career by taking a rather unpatriotic step: he emigrates to Europe, freshly married to a Jewish heiress who his friends compare to a "night-hag," a "moor," and a "gypsy" (Brown 1962: 416).

In ingeniously linking infection with colonial insurrection, labyrinthine cityscapes with racial horror, and a search for cultural identity with the fear of racial self-estrangement, Brown's novelistic discourse runs counter to the linear and providential logic of the nationalist epic. His non-teleological, circular, and rhizomorphic narrative spoils the project of creating a national literary mythology on which Brown had set out in the preface to *Edgar Huntly*. Not least, then, *Arthur Mervyn* demonstrates the relative autonomy of novelistic discourse from ideological constraints.

Both of Brown's novels suggest – as does Tyler's *Algerine Captive* – that colonial amnesia lies at the heart of forming a "postcolonial" or national identity in the early United States. All three plots are determined by "rhizomorphic" transatlantic relations which have to be subjected to erasure for a continental narrative to emerge. Claiming an oceanic identity, by contrast, Equiano and Hammon are free from such discursive restrictions. In all texts discussed in this chapter, however, the sense of identity produced is neither the providential personification of a secular errand nor yet the fully developed interiority of modernistic novelistic discourse, but it is rather provisional, exchangeable, contradictory, and relational – in short, "messy" (Schueller and Watts 2003).

The critical narratives of American studies are now in the process of leaving the agrarian complacency of critical Jeffersonianism and the dualistic horizon of critical Emersonianism. They have set out to discover the full potential of integrating the rhizomorphic tendrils by which the local cultures and literatures of colonial and early national North America were connected to local cultures and literatures around the

Atlantic world. This may enable us to develop, as Jean Howard suggests, a critical consciousness for the historical roots of present "macronarratives of inequality and injustice" in a world in which the "global reach of late capitalism is accompanied by, in fact depends upon, fragmentation: of subjectivities, knowledges, policies" (Howard 1991: 120–1). A knowledge of the heteroglossic structures of novelistic discourse, moreover, will enable us to see that, as the late Edward W. Said (to whom the postcolonial study of American culture owes so much) has reminded us over and over again, the cultures of colonialism and imperialism are not really invisible at all, nor do they conceal their worldly affiliations and interests. It is the critic's task, Said writes, to "remark the often scrupulous notations" in the "major lines" of "imperialism's culture" – not out of a certain "retrospective vindictiveness" but in response to a "fortified need for links and connections" dictated by the events of our own times. Because

> [one] of imperialism's achievements was to bring the world closer together and, although in the process the separation between Europeans and natives was an insidious and fundamentally unjust one, most of us should now regard the historical experience of empire as a common one. The task then is to describe it as pertaining to Indians *and* Britishers, Algerians *and* French, Westerners *and* Africans, Asians, Latin Americans, and Australians despite the horrors, the bloodshed, and the vengeful bitterness. (Said 1993: xxiv)

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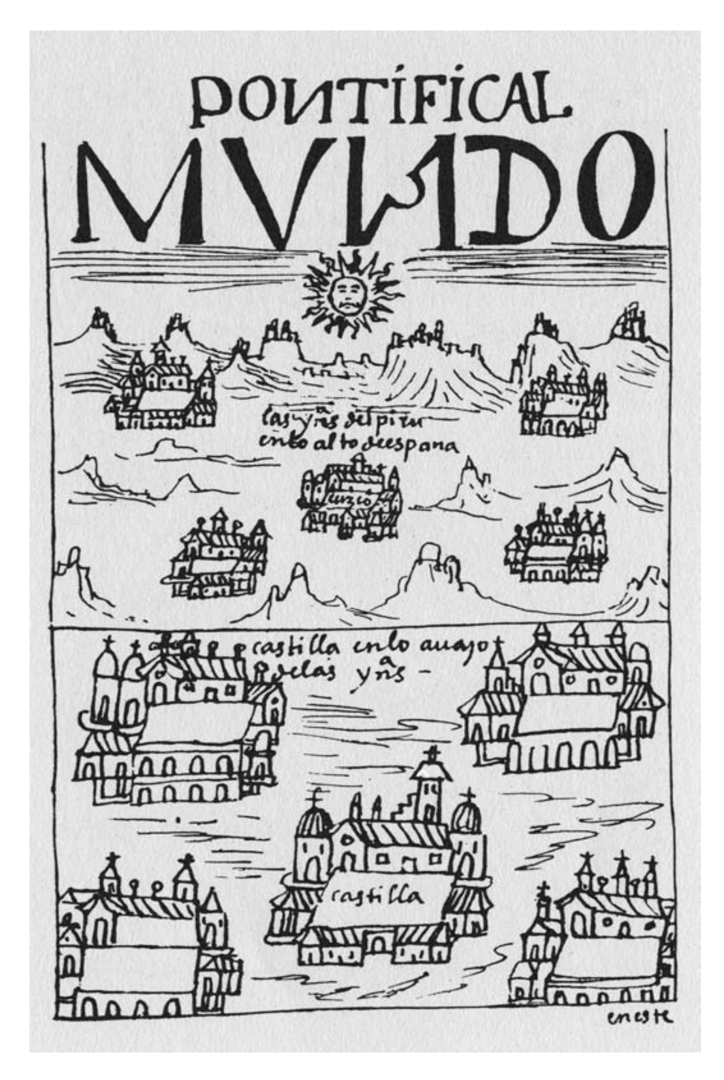
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PART FOUR
Genres and Writers: Cross-Cultural Conversations



"Pontifical Mundo: Las Indias del Perú ye el reino de Castilla" (Pontifical World: The Indies of Peru and the kingdom of Castile), from *Nueva corónica y buen gobierno* by Don Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, (written between 1567 and 1615), page 42. Reprinted by permission of the Americas Society. Notice the symbolically important placement of the cities of Peru in the New World above the kingdom of Castile in the Old World.

21
The Genres of Exploration and Conquest Literatures

E. Thomson Shields, Jr.

In his 1543 *Relación*, Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca narrates his story of being one of four surviving members of Pánfilo de Narváez's expedition that landed on the Florida peninsula in 1528. Having lost contact with their ships, expedition members build makeshift boats and sail from the Florida panhandle to the Texas coast. The few expedition members not lost at sea die or are taken captive by indigenous people. Ultimately, Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and three others escape, traversing the southwest, finding their way to Mexico's Spanish occupied Pacific coast eight years after first being lost. Near the end of his *Relación*, Núñez Cabeza de Vaca describes a moment in 1536 soon after finding his way back to Mexico when he is asked to speak to a group of Indians. The Indians have been hiding to escape capture by Spanish slavers. Spanish authorities want Núñez Cabeza de Vaca to encourage these Indians to return home and begin once again growing crops to feed themselves and the Spanish. This scene encapsulates many of the issues that define the genres of exploration and conquest literature. The Spanish authorities speak to the Indians first, telling how Spaniards, in particular Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and his fellow survivors,

> came on behalf of God who is in heaven . . . and that he blessed and rewarded the good, and punished the bad with perpetual fire . . . and that beyond this, if they desired to be Christians and serve God our Lord in the manner in which we [the Spanish] commanded them, that the Christians would take them as brothers and treat them very well, and we would order them [the Christians] not to provoke them or take them out of their lands, but rather to be their great friends, but that if they did not want to do this, the Christians would treat them very badly and carry them off as slaves to other lands. (Núñez Cabeza de Vaca 1999: 257–9)

To keep from being enslaved, the Indians reply that "they would be very good Christians and serve God" (ibid: 259), although it is not clear whether they mean it or not. This is not the end of the scene. Núñez Cabeza de Vaca himself raises questions with the Indians about their religious beliefs:

> And when asked to what they gave reverence and made sacrifices and whom they asked for water for their maize fields and health for themselves, they responded that it was to a man in the sky. We asked them what his name was. And they said it was Aguar, and that they believed that he had created the whole world and all things in it . . . We told them that the one to whom they referred we called God, and that thus they should call him and serve and adore him as we commanded and they would be well served by it. (Ibid)

The Indians again, but more convincingly, respond "they understood everything well and that thus they would do it" (ibid). While the Spanish authorities try to impose a belief system on the New World and its indigenous peoples, Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, who has lived among indigenous cultures, works toward acculturation, toward bringing Native American and Spanish cultures together. The Indians provide a positive but problematic response to the Spanish authorities' speech and to Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's dialogue. The sanctioned discourse of the Spanish authorities alongside Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's acculturated discourse and the limited Native American voice illustrate conflicting ways of dealing with new lands and encounters between different cultures.

These approaches to Europe's encounter with the Americas can be labeled "exploration and conquest," and the writings about them "the literature of exploration" and "the literature of conquest." It may be best to think of these genres not in literary terms – that is, as works that share formal similarities – but in rhetorical terms. Carolyn R. Miller argues that "a rhetorically sound definition of genre must be centered not on the substance or the form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish" (Miller 1984: 151). Miller's article holds a central place in the study of genre within the fields of rhetoric and of technical and professional communications. Many, if not most, of these early writings about America are types of technical and professional communication – formal reports to backers of expeditions, promotional pieces to encourage involvement with exploration and conquest of new lands, scientific reports about what was found, and so forth.

Therefore, in the case of exploration and conquest literatures, the motives that underlie the writings define their genres rather than shared formal elements, such as rhyme and meter in poetic forms like the sonnet. If this is so, then, as Anis Bawarshi notes, "Genres . . . constitute the very exigencies to which their users in turn rhetorically respond, so that the genre function does not simply precede independently of us but is rather something we reproduce as we function within it" (Bawarshi 2000: 355). Bawarshi highlights that genre as a rhetorical feature places both writers and readers within contexts to which they must respond – contexts both within the work (the expectations of the genre itself) and outside the work (the situation being described and the situation which generates the work). Central to understanding genre as social action is that genre contains at least two conflicting elements – the idea that genres are stable because they have recurring origins and features (though not necessarily formal ones) and the fact that individual texts are produced under specific conditions, making them unique in content and form. In other words, while there are socially

defined origins and constructs to genres, expectations that must be met in order for readers to derive meaning from authors' texts, at the same time the uniqueness of every situation counters expectations and makes genres unstable, always in flux (see Miller 1984, 1994; Coe, Lingard, and Teslenko 2000.)

For early American literatures of exploration and conquest, motives are recurring elements. One motive is that of exploration: the desire to describe a part of the world never seen before by Europeans. The other motive is that of conquest: the desire to gain control over newly encountered lands. These motives are not mutually exclusive. Europeans, traveling to what for them was a new world, wrote in attempts to describe and to control what they encountered, from geographic features, to flora and fauna, to native peoples.

Of course, other approaches to exploration and conquest literature are possible. Wayne Franklin (1979) divides these writings into three groups: literatures of discovery, exploration, and settlement. He differentiates these types according to form, with discovery literature as descriptive, giving an idealized picture of the New World's potential; exploration literature as narrative, showing movement from the difficult present to the fulfilled future; and settlement literature as, again, narrative, illustrating the impossibility of achieving idealized visions of the New World. Myra Jehlen portrays exploration and conquest literature as exercises in empire building based on form – what Jehlen refers to as the "plainer, more functional prose style of imperial writings" (Jehlen 1994: 33). Both approaches are valid and useful; however, emphasizing form highlights only similarities between works of exploration and conquest literature. Equal attention should be given to differences between works. Examining motives and contexts allows such a double perspective.

The scene from Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's *Relación* recounted at the opening illustrates the motive driving exploration literature – the desire to describe newly encountered cultures – by presenting indigenous religious belief in Aguar/God. Attempting to interpret indigenous American culture for his European audience, Núñez Cabeza de Vaca uses the Christian god as a comprehensible parallel for Indians' religious beliefs. At the same time, the motive behind conquest literature – inscribing control over new lands – can be seen in the Spanish authorities' demand that the Indians become Christian and in Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's attempts to enculturate the Indians' beliefs within Christianity. The Spanish authorities appear to be crudely imposing control on the Indians and, through them, on the land. In Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's questions, the Indians' answers, and Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's final response, the Christian god takes authority over Aguar, though through a negotiated acculturation: Spanish culture takes control over Indian culture and lands by acknowledging Indian culture and allowing it to have a limited effect on Spanish culture. The recurring motives of exploration and conquest literatures create a stable point from which readers – both in the sixteenth century and today – can interpret these works in terms of genre. (On adaptation of indigenous cultural practices into Spanish church liturgy, see Shields 2000; on Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's survival through acculturation, see Adorno 1991.)

The Núñez Cabeza de Vaca example also reveals the instability underlying every use of a genre because of the unique conditions under which individual works are produced. How authors approach writing about exploration and conquest depends on a number of factors, from their backgrounds, to the parts and people of the Americas being described, to the time periods in which the exploration or conquest occurred or was written about, to the audience being addressed. For example, when the Spanish authorities demand that the Indians become Christian or be subject to slavery, the Indians reply, "they would be very good Christians and serve God." When Núñez Cabeza de Vaca suggests the Indians not make major shifts in their belief system but simply shift the language used for their beliefs, they reply, "they understood everything well and that thus they would do it." The words are not that different from moment to moment, but as the context changes, the implied meaning shifts drastically, from "we will tell you what you want to hear" to "OK, that might work." The shifting language of conquest evokes differing responses. The Spanish authorities use the language of power, commanding and ordering things to be done (the verb *mandar* is used for both actions in the original Spanish); Núñez Cabeza de Vaca presents similar ideas but in the subjunctive: "they should call him . . . they would be . . . " The Spanish authorities, always assuming control (despite having lost control in this instance), give their language of conquest a different form than that used by a man who has spent the past eight years cut off from Spanish culture, living among different groups of indigenous peoples. Though both desire control over the local Indians, the forms they use to gain control differ because each speaker's situation is unique. What is meant by control, by conquest, differs in each case.

The balance between recurring elements and unique situations appears throughout early American exploration and conquest literature. In exploration literature, this balance comes from the nature of exploration itself. Explorers moving into unknown territories do not arrive as a tabula rasa, a blank slate, waiting to objectively record what is encountered. Instead, explorers come with presuppositions about what they will find.

Christopher Columbus often serves as the prototypical writer of exploration literature. Columbus arrived in the Caribbean in 1492 not knowing that the Caribbean existed. Instead, he started his first voyage with the idea he would travel west from Europe and arrive in the Greater Indies – China, Japan, and the rest of east Asia. When he comes across Cuba, the largest island he visits, he believes he has found the Chinese mainland. Throughout all four of his voyages to the Caribbean rim, Columbus never believed he had found anything other than the easternmost parts of the Greater Indies.

This belief would not matter much except it has rhetorical implications. In his writings, Columbus needs to describe these lands, and he must convince his backers – particularly the king and queen of Spain – that his voyage has been a financial success. In promising access to the Greater Indies, Columbus promises Spain access to the riches they believe lie there. To that end, Columbus writes the following near the end of his letter to the royal treasurer:

> Finally . . . I promise this, that if I am supported by our most invincible sovereigns, with a little of their help, as much gold can be supplied as they will need, indeed as much of spices, of cotton, of chewing gum (which is found only in Chios), also as much of aloes wood, and as many slaves for the navy, as their majesties wish to demand. Likewise rhubarb and other kinds of spices . . . (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 26)

The big sell shows Columbus arriving in the Greater Indies, a source of gold, spices, and even mastic (chewing gum), all in quantities that any person, or sovereign, could want. Columbus describes the places he has explored in terms of what he knows and believes.

As an exploration writer Columbus, much like Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, equates the new things he finds with things familiar to himself and his readers. Columbus makes these connections not only with the Greater Indies, but with his audience's European experiences as well. For example, while describing the incredibly abundant flora and fauna of the lands he explores, Columbus writes: "The nightingale and various other birds without number that were singing, in the month of November, when I was exploring them exceed belief, unless one has seen them" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 24). To ground his description of something almost unbelievable – implying it is inexpressible to someone who has not shared the experience – Columbus mentions one specific detail, the nightingale. However, we may never know what bird Columbus heard singing. Nightingales are indigenous to Europe, but not the Americas.

While Columbus' exploration literature shares the motive of explaining the new with Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's, the specific situations of their creation are quite different from one another. Because neither he nor his European audience had any idea of a world outside of Europe, Asia, and Africa, Columbus is unable to express ideas about the places he has discovered in terms beyond those used to describe the "Old World." In fact, as Columbus' desires grew concerning the lands he has seen, so did his Old World rhetoric, ultimately identifying these lands as the earthly Paradise, the Garden of Eden, the presumed confluence of the Tigris, Euphrates, Ganges, and Nile rivers. On his third voyage, in 1498, Columbus encountered the great outflow of the Orinoco River into the Gulf of Paria along South America's northeast coast. In a letter to the king and queen, Columbus claims he has found the high point of the earth, the origin of the rivers that flow from the earthly paradise (Columbus 1988: 28–38, 42). To explain his presumed discovery, Columbus uses the most desirable trope available: the Caribbean rim as an approach to the Garden of Eden.

By the time Núñez Cabeza de Vaca wrote his story in the mid-sixteenth century, Europeans had begun conceiving of the lands on the western edge of the Atlantic as different from lands already known. To use Mexican critic Edmundo O'Gorman's (1958, 1961) expression, Europe was inventing the idea of America. Once the idea of a previously unknown part of the world spread in Europe, exploration literature had a different context. Still, Núñez Cabeza de Vaca understood that for his audience, his experiences were new. Therefore, through comparisons, he highlights the differences

between the two worlds as much as or more than the similarities. For example, as the first European to describe the North American bison, Núñez Cabeza de Vaca writes:

> Cows sometimes range as far as here [the Texas coast] . . . And it seems to me that they are about the size of those in Spain. They have small horns like Moorish cows, and their fur is very long. Some are brown and others black, and in my opinion they have better meat and more of it than cows from [Spain] . . . These cows come from the north forward through the land to the coast of *Florida* and they extend over the land for more than four hundred leagues. (Núñez Cabeza de Vaca 1999: 147)

While using tropes familiar to Europeans – these are cows, not bison; they are similar in size to European cows; they have short horns like the Spanish cows originally from north Africa – in fact, he implies that these cows have some significant differences from those in Europe. They have long fur. They have more and better meat than European cows. And they do this without being domesticated. Seeming to create parallels between the New and Old Worlds, Núñez Cabeza de Vaca actually distinguishes between them.

One more similarity connects different works of exploration literature. When examined as a rhetorical genre, as social actions, exploration and conquest literatures define not only the motives of writers and their texts, but also define the motives of texts' readers. By describing their discoveries as they do, both Columbus and Núñez Cabeza de Vaca meet their readers' expectations. Columbus' audience is the Spanish court, which helped back his voyage. To continue backing further voyages, the court needs promises of a way to pay for them. Therefore, one theme running through Columbus' writings is gold. In the letter from his first voyage, Columbus writes about Hispaniola (or Hispana): "This Hispana, moreover, abounds in different kinds of spices, in gold, and in metals" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 25). Even as he tells about the perceived innocent or naive goodness of the island's indigenous people, Columbus plays on his readers' desires by relating these qualities in terms of gold: "They show greater love for all others than for themselves; they give valuable things for trifles . . . cotton and gold for pieces of bows, bottles, jugs and jars, like persons without reason" (ibid). While Columbus points out the innocence or *naïveté* of the indigenous people, he also makes clear these lands can fulfill his readers' desire for gold.

Writing under different circumstances, Núñez Cabeza de Vaca addresses different desires in his readers. While Núñez Cabeza de Vaca does not omit the desire for gold, he emphasizes the new, what European readers will find different in the New World. For example, he relates a story that he and his fellow survivors were told by the Avavares, a tribe in modern-day southern Texas or northern Mexico. The story concerns a figure named Badthing, or *Mala Cosa*:

> They said that a man wandered through the country whom they called Badthing; he was small of body and wore a beard . . . When he came to the house where they lived, their

> hair stood up and they trembled . . . He entered and seized whom he chose, and giving him three great gashes in the side with a very sharp flint . . . he put his hand through them, drawing forth the entrails, from one of which he would cut off a portion . . . and throw it on the embers. Then he would give three gashes to an arm, the second cut on the inside of an elbow, and would sever the limb. A little after this, he would begin to unite it, and putting his hands on the wounds, these would instantly become healed . . . When it pleased him he would take a *buhío*, or house, and lifting it high, after a little he would come down with it in a heavy fall. They also stated that many times they offered him victuals, but that he never ate: they asked him whence he came and where was his abiding place, and he showed them a fissure in the earth and said that his house was there below. (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 39)

This demonic figure could be seen as an image of Satan, making a connection between the belief systems of the Americas and Europe. And Núñez Cabeza de Vaca ultimately identifies Badthing as the Devil, in a manner reminiscent of the enculturation connecting the Native American god Aguar to the Christian god:

> We told them he [Badthing] was an evil one, and in the best way we could, gave them to understand, that if they would believe in God our Lord, and become Christians like us, they need have no fear of him, nor would he dare to come and inflict those injuries, and they might be certain he would not venture to appear while we remained in the land. At this they were delighted and lost much of their dread. (Ibid)

But before he develops this enculturation, Núñez Cabeza de Vaca indicates that the Avavares' experience of the Devil is not like any European experience. After telling how he heard about Badthing coming into their homes, he writes: "These things they told us of, we much laughed at and ridiculed; and they seeing our incredulity, brought to us many of those they said he had seized; and we saw the marks of the gashes made in the places according to the manner they had described" (ibid). Enculturation requires the recognition of cultural differences, so that Núñez Cabeza de Vaca's tale of Badthing highlights his European readers' desire to see Native American culture as significantly, even if not completely, different from their own.

Other Europeans writing exploration literature of the Americas also use similar rhetorical strategies in varying contexts. For example, the Portuguese Pero Vaz de Caminha wrote a letter in 1500 to King Manuel I of Portugal as part of the Pedro Álvares Cabral expedition, the first European expedition to encounter Brazil and its native peoples. Cabral was leading the second voyage from Portugal to India; by accident the fleet sailed southwest and came along the Brazilian coast. While Cabral recognized his discovery's importance – he sent one ship back with the news, including Vaz de Caminha's letter – he soon set sail again with the rest of the fleet around the southern tip of Africa for the Indian Ocean.

In his letter, Vaz de Caminha describes his wonder at the native people of Brazil, describing them in a manner standard among exploration writers – as naive natives who inadvertently indicate the potential for great wealth from the new lands:

> One of them saw some white rosary beads and nodded for them to be given to him. He played with them and put them around his neck and then took them off and wrapped them around his arm, and pointed to land and then to the beads and to the Captain's chain, as though saying they would give gold for them. We interpreted it thus because we wished it to be so, but if he meant that he would take the beads and the chain, we did not wish to understand because we had no intention of giving them to him. (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 34)

While Vaz de Caminha follows the standard practice of portraying the naive indigenous population – here fascinated with simple rosary beads and willing to trade gold for them – he also notes that it may be the *naïveté* of the Portuguese explorers that creates such a picture of the natives: "We interpreted it thus because we wished it to be so" and "we did not wish to understand." The Portuguese's beliefs are mediated by their desires. By admitting the Portuguese's own biases, Vaz de Caminha creates exploration literature that describes a part of the world never seen before by Europeans in a manner not often found in other early American exploration narratives. One possible reason why Vaz de Caminha's letter takes this different view is that what he describes is not the main goal of the expedition. Vaz de Caminha can be self-effacing because he imagined himself to be voyaging to India, and Brazil is a secondary discovery.

Another example of the varying contexts for exploration literature is the Englishman Thomas Hariot's 1588 *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*. Hariot accompanied the expedition of Richard Grenville and Ralph Lane in 1585–6 to establish a colony on Roanoke Island along the coast of present-day North Carolina. Just as any other writer of exploration literature, Hariot tries to describe to English readers a part of the world they have never seen. Among the items Hariot describes is the spoonleaf yucca, which has curly fibers coming off its long leaves. Hariot writes:

> *Silke of grasse or grasse Silke*. There is a kind of grasse in the countrey vppon blades whereof there groweth very good silke in forme of a thin glittering skin to be stript of . . . The like groweth in Persia, which is in the selfe same climate as *Virginia*, of which very many of the silke workes that come from thence into Europe are made. (Hariot 1969: B1^{r}–B1^{v})

Hariot reveals several layers of intent. He tries to decipher what is unfamiliar in this part of the New World. Coming across a new plant, what should it be called? He has to explain this new plant in a form recognizable to English readers. Hariot labels the plant with the descriptor *silk*, a word which serves as a descriptor, but also fulfills one of his readers' desires – the promise of riches from the newly found land for both those who backed the expedition and for those who may want to be part of a future expedition. Of course, the problem is that one cannot get silk from the spoonleaf yucca. Like Columbus' nightingale, Hariot's silk grass turns something New World into an Old World item. But rhetorically, Hariot has created the possibility of wealth from this new land.

How Hariot arranges his discoveries is interesting as well. He begins with "The first part of Marchantable [Merchantable] commodities" (ibid: B1^r), of which the first is "*Silke of grasse*." With one exception, all the commodities are already known in Europe. He describes tobacco, an item that would become marketable in Europe, only in the second section, commodities "for victuall and sustenance of mans life, vsually fed vpon by the naturall inhabitants: as also by vs during the time of our abroad" (ibid: C1^r). Because tobacco was not then being sold for profit in Europe, Hariot placed it in a secondary position, like most of the items he recognizes as native solely to the Americas.

However, Hariot leaves open the possible marketability of this American product when he describes tobacco's benefits:

> The leaues thereof being dried and brought into powder: they vse to take the fume or smoke thereof by sucking it through pipes made of claie into their stomacke and heade; from whence it purgeth superfluous fleame & other grosse humors, openeth all the pores & passages of the body: by which meanes the vse thereof, not only preserueth the body from obstructions; but also if any be, so that they haue not beene of too long continuance, in short time breaketh them: wherby their bodies are notably preserued in health, & know not many greeuous diseases wherewithall wee in England are oftentimes afflicted. (Ibid: C3^r–C3^v)

Hariot notes, "We ourselues during the time we were there vsed to suck it after their maner, as also since our returne, & haue found manie rare and wonderful experiments of the vertues thereof" (ibid: C3^v). While tobacco remains one of the "commodities for sustenance of life" (ibid), its healing properties – ironic in today's world – give it market potential.

The context for Hariot's emphasis on marketability is not just the desire to make the expedition profitable – or at least to suggest future profits. The introduction Hariot writes for his *Briefe and True Report* indicates a different context for exploration literature than that found in many other works. The Roanoke ventures, especially the 1585–6 expedition of Grenville and Lane, were under attack in England. Hariot describes the controversy he found upon his return to England in 1586:

> There haue bin diuers and variable reportes with some slaunderous and shamefull speeches bruited abroade by many that returned from thence. Especially of that discouery which was made by the Colony transported by Sir Richard Greinuile in the yeare 1585, being of all the others the most principal and as yet of most effect, the time of their abode in the countrey beeing a whole yeare, when as in the other voyage before they staied but sixe weekes; and the others after were onlie for supply and transportation, nothing more being discouered then had been before, which reports haue not done a little wrong to many that otherwise would haue also fauoured & aduentured in the action, to the honour and benefite of our nation, besides the particular profite and credite which would redound to themselues the dealers therein. (Ibid: A3^r–A3^v)

The New World lands Hariot describes must be valuable not only to encourage further exploration, but also to clear the expedition's good name. Hariot must describe things his readers have never experienced before in such a way that they see the value of both the discoveries and of the discoverers. To this end, he uses his personal experience, his length of stay in the colony, to his rhetorical advantage.

The full range of exploration literature cannot be understood until we recognize that European works describing the New World and its inhabitants to European readers weren't the only works of exploration literature. Native American stories of encounters with Europeans are exploration literature as well, though what was new came to them rather than their going to new places. For example, a tale from the Lipan Apache of Texas tells how they first encountered Europeans or European Americans. Collected by Morris Edward Opler in 1935 and given the title "The White People Who Came in a Boat," this story has the same rhetorical purpose as European tales of exploration or discovery: to explain something newly encountered in terms other people of the culture can understand. The story tells how one day, when the Lipan were living by the Gulf of Mexico, probably sometime in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, they saw a black speck on the water. The speck turned out to be a boat, and the boat came to shore: "People were coming out. They looked at those people coming out. They saw that those people had blue eyes and were white. They thought that these people might live in the water all the time" (Opler 1969: 283). By suggesting the blue-eyed, white-skinned people might live on the water, the story marks whites as different from Lipans. The tribe discusses whether to kill these white-skinned people; the decision is to "let them go and see what they'll do" because while they have light-colored skin and hair, "they have a shape just like ours" (ibid). As with any exploration work, the Lipan explore the whites by marking points of difference while using language of similarity.

The significant feature of exploration literature is how similarities and differences are combined. One telling moment in the Lipan story occurs when the natives are deciding what to call these light-skinned people. The story relates what the Lipan see as they watch the whites from a hiding place: "One white man went out a little way, before them all, and urinated. Then the Apache said, 'Let's call them "He Urinates." ' So after that they called them by that name" (ibid: 283–4). The unflattering name puts the Lipan in a position superior to the white-skinned people. It allows some of the Lipan to continue pressing to kill the whites. But the tribe decides not to kill them and, instead, goes back to observe and ultimately visit with the whites:

> It was spring. The Lipan gave them [the few whites who hadn't starved to death] some pumpkin seed and corn seed and told them how to use it. The people took it and after that they got along all right . . . Later on the Lipan left for a while. When they returned, the white people were getting along very well . . . After that they began to get thick. The Lipan were coming toward the west then. The Lipan never did go back to the coast. (Ibid: 284)

Because this exploration between cultures is told from the point of view of a culture interested in newcomers but not particularly desirous of having continued contact, the plot differs from most European exploration tales. The threat of the new culture is discussed but never realized, and the sense of threat is lessened by unflattering, even humorous, descriptions of the new culture. It is exploration literature, with the rhetorical intent of describing something new in a way that fits within the mindset of the culture creating the description, but the cultural context gives the story a form different than that of most European exploration literature. As an oral tale collected more than a hundred years after the events described, the context is more complex than just the story as told at the time of the events. Retold to a European American anthropologist after the Lipan Apache were reservationized, the tale also serves as a mixed compliment and critique of European Americans – the Lipan helped in a time of need, but the comically figured European Americans needed help. (For other Native American tales of first encounters, see Lankford 1987: 136–42.)

Of course, not all first encounters were friendly. Aztec stories of their encounter with the Spanish serve as prototypical versions of violent encounter narratives. Collected by Spanish priests after the conquest, these narratives tell how between 1519 and 1521 Hernán Cortés led a group of Spanish soldiers from the coast to the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan, present-day Mexico City, conquering the city and the Aztec empire. While retelling the events of the encounter, these narratives are more about Aztec loss of control than about interpreting newly encountered cultures. The narratives include omens from ten years before the Spanish arrival, telling about grave events to come, omens such as columns of fire, temples burnt by lightning, and the disembodied voice of a woman crying in the night for her lost sons. These omens are rhetorically interesting because they need fulfillment through a grave event, such as the conquest of Tenochtitlan, to have meaning. The omens are themselves compressed tales of conquest.

Even narratives portraying the initial encounters and illustrating how the Aztecs described this new culture have overtones of the conquest to follow. The first sighting of Spanish ships, reported to the Aztec ruler Montezuma by a *macehual*, or common man, is described in terms similar to the Lipan Apache story. The Aztecs have no term for a European ship and, therefore, come up with a metaphor from their own experiences: "When I went to the shores of the great sea, there was a mountain range or small mountain floating in the midst of the water, and moving here and there without touching the shore" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 64). Similarly, the Aztecs describe how the Spanish catch fish not only by describing the ship using familiar terms, but also by marking the difference between themselves and the strangers:

> Our lord and king, it is true that strange people have come to the shores of the great sea. They were fishing from a small boat, some with rods and others with a net. They fished until late and then they went back to their two great towers [their ships] and climbed up into them . . . They have light skin, much lighter than ours. They all have long beards, and their hair comes only to their ears. (Ibid: 65)

While the emphasis on difference is a form of exploration literature – they don't go to sea like us and they certainly don't look like us – the next line puts the Spanish in a new context, one that changes these descriptions into passages about Spanish conquest and Aztec loss of power: "Montezuma was downcast when he heard this report, and did not speak a word" (ibid).

Other narrative passages make the context of conquest as described by the conquered even clearer. For example, during the final Spanish siege of Tenochtitlan, the indigenous people flee the city:

> When the princes were made captives, the people began to leave, searching for a place to stay. Everyone was in tatters, and the women's thighs were almost naked. The Christians searched all the refugees. They even opened the women's skirts and blouses and felt everywhere: their ears, their breasts, their hair. Our people scattered in all directions. (Castillo & Schweitzer 2001: 70)

These are stories about loss of power. Literature of conquest, like that of exploration, takes many forms. The motive that ties the literature of conquest together – the desire to control a part of the world by writing about it – is sometimes expressed in terms of the failure to gain control, not just in terms of success.

How changing contexts make descriptions of similar events quite different can be seen in two views of the Spanish conquest of the Aztecs. One aspect of Aztec culture that troubled the Spanish was human sacrifice. These sacrifices are an important motif in Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *History of the Conquest of New Spain*, written in 1568 by one of Cortés's soldiers. Díaz del Castillo describes a scene after the Spanish lose their initial siege of Tenochtitlan and the Aztecs take several Spanish soldiers captive, ultimately sacrificing them. Cortés and his men, upset at the loss of their comrades, return to the battle and find their way into a house where the remains of their comrades have been placed:

> . . . in one of those small houses there were some beams from which the heads of many of our Spaniards whom they had killed and sacrificed during the recent battles had been hung . . . I recognized three of my fellow soldiers, and it made tears come to our eyes to see them in this condition. We left them where they were for the moment, but they were taken down twelve days later, when we took away those and other heads that had been offered to the idols and buried them in a church that we built, which is called the Martyrs. (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 58–9)

More than forty years after the events, Díaz del Castillo, writing from the New World, defends its conquest. He portrays the sacrifices as horrible, but the conquest's ultimate success – made even more successful because through it Díaz del Castillo rose from poor soldier to colonial governor – allows him to emphasize the positive side of the scene. Díaz del Castillo doesn't simply find the heartbreaking remains of his fellow soldiers; he honors them by writing about their interment in a church that labels these men as martyrs. Evil sacrifices are transformed into blessed martyrdom.

On the other hand, Aztec descriptions of human sacrifices become warnings that the Spanish will be trouble. As the Spanish arrive in the Valley of Mexico, where Tenochtitlan is located, the Aztecs greet them with honors. They bring Cortés suns of gold and silver, a gold collar, a gold pitcher. They hold ceremonies in honor of Cortés, whom they call the Captain: "The envoys made sacrifices in front of the Captain. At this, he grew very angry. When they offered him blood in an 'eagle dish,' he shouted at the man who offered it and struck him with his sword" (ibid: 65). Stories of misunderstood human sacrifice could be told to a sympathetic priest, Bernardino de Sahagún, a Franciscan missionary, because the sacrifices stopped and no longer threatened Christian domination. The conquered Aztecs can tell a tale of lost power by portraying Spanish displeasure at human sacrifices. What should have been a moment of communion instead becomes the rejection of Aztec culture by the Spanish. The Aztecs through the priest Sahagún portray this rejection in a manner that explains how the Aztecs found themselves in a subordinate position to the Spanish. (For more on these narratives, see Leon-Portilla 1962.)

However, not every European attempt at conquest succeeded. As Hariot noted in the introduction to his *Briefe and True Report*, the reputation of the 1585–6 Roanoke expedition and of this part of the Americas suffered from "slaunderous and shamefull speeches." Governor Ralph Lane, being in charge of the colony, fell under this shadow of failure. Lane tells his story of the colony in "An account of the particularities of the imployments of the English men left in Virginia by Sir Richard Greeneuill vnder the charge of Master Ralfe Lane," a report addressed to the expedition's backer, Walter Ralegh, first printed in the 1589 edition of Richard Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations*. Lane finds himself defending his decision to abandon Roanoke island while still portraying the area as a good place to settle. Lane accomplishes both by embedding within the story of the expedition's failure to find riches the narrative of an imagined perfect expedition – what could have been. Lane creates on paper the successful conquest he was unable to achieve on Roanoke Island.

Describing what he would have done to reach a bay filled with pearls that Menatonon, the Native American king of Choanoke, had told him about, Lane writes:

> I woulde haue sent a small Barke with two Pinnesses about by Sea to the Northward to haue found out the Bay he spake of . . . while I with all the small boats I could make, and with two hundreth men would have gone to the head of the River of Choanoak, with the guides that Menatonon would have given, which I would haue been assured should haue bene of his best men. (Lane 1965: 739)

Lane continues telling about this imagined perfect expedition in a narrative filled with *would*'s and *should*'s. He prefaces his narrative of the perfect expedition, however, by telling why it was not accomplished. "If your supplie had come before the end of April," Lane writes to Ralegh, "and that you had sent any store of boats, or men, to haue had them made in any reasonable time, with a sufficient number of men, and victuals to have found us untill the new corne were come in . . . " (ibid). Lane embeds

within his story of rich lands the story of how his chance at success was thwarted. Of course, in order not to blame his employer, Lane notes, “if the lorde had bene pleased” he would have succeeded, but God “in his eternall prouidence now at the last set some other course in these things” (ibid: 742). Lane’s imagined narrative of successful conquest saves his own reputation and that of the lands he set out to colonize.

The imagined conquest as a way to cultivate a sense of control takes different forms depending on the writer and situation. In his 1624 *Generall Historie*, John Smith has to explain why his leadership was successful at conquering Virginia despite the fact that the Jamestown colony was plagued with troubles. Rather than openly portraying a successful conquest, Smith claims success by presenting an imagined narrative of what Jamestown would have been without him. Writing in the third person, Smith asks:

> Now whether it had beene better for Captaine Smith . . . to have abandoned the Country, with some ten or twelve of them, who were called the better sort, and have left Master Hunt our preacher, Master Anthony Gosnoll, a most honest, worthy, and industrious Gentleman, Master Thomas Wotton, and some 27 others of his Countrymen to the fury of the Salvages, famine, and all manner of mischiefes, and inconveniences . . . I leave to the censure of all honest men to consider. (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 202)

By embedding within the narrative of actual events an imagined narrative of how much worse Jamestown would have been without him, Smith portrays his Jamestown as a successful, if incomplete, conquest. It is the story of a man writing years later, as Jamestown continues to exist despite continued troubles, who can place himself within the actions that helped the colony grow.

The use of imagined conquest is not limited to European writers. In 1613 the Incan writer Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, who was born around 1525, before the Spanish arrival in Peru, completed his lengthy *Letter to a King* (800 manuscript pages, including 400 drawings), addressed to Philip III of Spain. Poma de Ayala addresses many complaints the Inca have against the Spanish. To make his point, Poma de Ayala asks the king to imagine what it would be like if Spain were conquered by Peruvians:

> To sum up what I have to say, the Spaniards in Peru should be made to refrain from arrogance and brutality towards the Indians. Just imagine that our people were to arrive in Spain and start confiscating property, sleeping with the women and girls, chastising the men and treating everyone like pigs! What would the Spaniards do then? Even if they tried to endure their lot with resignation, they would still be liable to be arrested, tied to a pillar, and flogged. And if they rebelled and attempted to kill their prosecutors, they would certainly go to their death on the gallows. (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 123)

To explain the conquest of Inca culture to the conquerors, Poma de Ayala writes a second conquest, a reversal of the first. In an attempt to lessen the problems of Spanish

conquest, Poma de Ayala conquers the Spanish, even if only by holding up a mirror to the conquerors and only on paper.

Exploration and conquest literatures are genres that begin with similar rhetorical aims, but each work within the genre is unique. Furthermore, as different areas of the Americas were explored and colonized, and as different European nations encountered different Native American cultures, the literature of exploration and conquest changed. Nor were these genres purely the domain of European and European American writers. Native Americans as well as Europeans and European Americans needed to explain newly encountered people and how power shifted, generally from indigenous to European hands. From the variety of forms taken by the desire for understanding and control come the varieties of exploration and conquest narratives.

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22
The Conversion Narrative in Early America

Lisa M. Gordis

In her *vida*, or life narrative, criolla nun María de San José (1656–1719) describes a dramatic conversion. During her childhood in rural central Mexico, she curses another girl, and "before the word was out of [her] mouth, God permitted a lightning bolt to strike," killing an animal nearby. To María, this is "a bolt of light that the Lord Himself aimed at [her] very heart," warning "that as He took the life of that animal, He could with much greater cause have taken [her] own!" and testifying to God's merciful forbearance. Her sense of peril is reinforced by a vision of "the devil . . . seated on the bottom step in human form, like a naked mulatto," who threatens "You are mine. You will not escape my clutches" (María 1999: 15).

María describes her experiences as thoroughly transforming:

> I found myself so altered that even I did not know myself. I was no longer what I had been. For it was as though a great window had opened in my soul, and through it came a very bright light, by which I could see and understand with great clarity and light all that the Lord had done and suffered and undertaken to ransom me at the expense of his most precious blood. (Ibid: 16)

She becomes conscious of her "many and grave faults," seeing each sin as "a spear that ran through my heart and my soul" (ibid: 16). Adopting the conventional images of window, light, and pierced heart, María presents her experience as a conversion.

The following day, a second vision confirms that conversion. An "image of Our Lady . . . holding the Baby Jesus" promises that Christ will "receive [María] in His grace," instructs her to "find a Confessor," and, offering a ring from the baby's hand, invites her "to be wed to her Most Blessed Son" (ibid: 16–17). Echoing Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle*, María describes her heart dissolving: "it seemed my heart was being torn from my breast; and dissolved in tears, I spilled it out through my eyes" (Teresa 1957: 236–8; María 1999: 17). Tears and language blend, as María makes

"confession, more with tears than with words," and is pronounced forgiven (María 1999: 17).

While María recounts a lifetime of spiritual growth, her conversion itself is narrowly defined by these three events. In contrast, *The Autobiography* of English Puritan migrant Thomas Shepard (1605–49) describes a drawn out ordeal of false starts and setbacks. For Shepard, explains Michael McGiffert, "Sainthood" involved repeated "renewed conversions," and was "rather a process than a settled condition" (McGiffert 1994: 25). Shepard begins his account by describing his sinful youth in religiously backward English "blind town[s]" (Shepard 1994: 40). Though Shepard records the blessings and providences preceding his conversion, these providences sometimes seem small and Shepard's prayers – often asking God to spare the lives of loved ones – frequently go unanswered. Even when God answers Shepard's prayers, Shepard sees neither lightning bolts nor comforting visions. Early in his *Autobiography*, for example, Shepard reports being "troubled" when he "could not take notes of the [minister's] sermon." Having "prayed to the Lord earnestly that he would help me to note sermons," Shepard reports "cause of wondering at the Lord's providence therein, for as soon as ever I had prayed (after my best fashion) then for it, I presently the next Sabbath was able to take notes who the precedent Sabbath could do nothing at all this way" (ibid: 41). Only by proceeding in a comparative mode – by comparing his enabled note-taking with his prior difficulties – can Shepard find evidence of wondrous divine intervention.

Shepard's conversion itself is buried amid multiple moments of spiritual transformation and backsliding, replicating in narrative terms the uncertainty Shepard expressed about his spiritual state. Repeatedly, Shepard describes his heart as "much affected," only to lament "break[ing] loose from the Lord again" or "[shaking] this off also and [falling] from God to loose and lewd company, to lust and pride and gaming and bowling and drinking" (ibid: 42–3). Moments of comfort are less vivid. After hearing John Preston preach, Shepard reports:

> I did then begin to prize [Christ] and he became very sweet unto me, although I had heard many a time Christ freely offered by his ministry if I would come and receive him as Lord and Savior and Husband. But I found my heart ever unwilling to accept of Christ upon these terms; I found them impossible for me to keep that condition, and Christ was not so sweet as my lust. But now the Lord made himself sweet to me and to embrace him and to give up myself unto him. But yet after this I had many fears and doubts.
>
> (5) I found therefore the Lord revealing free mercy and that all my help was in that to give me Christ and to enable me to believe in Christ and accept of him, and here I did rest. (Ibid: 47)

Even divine comfort and sweetness are punctuated by "fears and doubts." Again, the moment is identifiable as a conversion largely in comparative terms, distinguished by the "rest" which interrupts Shepard's persistent anxiety. Yet Shepard feared that security and hypocrisy were linked (McGiffert 1994: 26). *The Autobiography* thus

tempers the drama of Shepard's conversion, emphasizing Shepard's continued struggle in its wake.

As the narratives of María and Shepard suggest, the term "conversion" embraces diverse transformations, from the "change of mind or behavior marked by a single, identifiable event in history" to a longer "process of redemption that was [perceived as] initiated, sustained, and completed, if at all, by God's action" (Morrison 1992: 3, xv). American conversion narratives, texts in which conversion is the (or sometimes a) central plot element, are enormously varied: narratives by English Puritan clergy and laity, penned privately or delivered publicly for church admission; the *relations* of French missionary priests and nuns; the *vidas* of Spanish and criolla nuns in New Spain; and accounts by or about Native American converts. While converts and their experiences vary, conversion narratives are linked by their literariness, that is, by authors' sense that their experiences could and should be narrated, and moreover by their sense of the conversion narrative as a literary form with specific requirements (Caldwell 1983: 41). Indeed, explains Karl F. Morrison, "The first and perhaps the most essential features of conversion, in its religious senses, are that it is a name, not a thing, and that the word is a metaphor" (Morrison 1992: 2). The conversion narrative is not a transparent account of spiritual history, but rather a literary form which itself helps to define and constitute the writer's conversion. Authors of conversion narratives do not simply describe their experiences, but rather place those experiences in the context of familiar paradigms. Moreover, the genre is rooted in the assumption that conversion as a spiritual process involves and transforms converts as readers and narrators. Many authors experience conversions while reading the Bible or other religious texts, and find themselves empowered as readers and writers. In fact, many writers suggest that converts are obligated to describe their spiritual experiences; for them, conversion not only enables narrative, but actually demands it.

Paradigms of Conversion

As they interpret and narrate their experiences, convert-authors draw on literary models rooted in two primary paradigms: the biblical conversion of Paul and the conversion of Augustine of Hippo. Paul's description of his conversion in Acts 22 establishes several formal conventions that shape subsequent Christian conversion narratives. Paul begins by acknowledging his sinful past self, explaining that as Saul he was "taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God," "persecut[ing] this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women" (Acts 22: 3–4). Paul identifies his journey to Damascus with that sinful self: Saul goes "to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished" (Acts 22: 5).

But God interrupts Saul's errand of persecution, transforming it into a spiritual journey: "suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me. And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou

me? And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest" (Acts 22: 6–8). The divine call is personal and individual. While others present "saw indeed the light, and were afraid . . . [they] heard not the voice of him that spake to" Saul (Acts 22: 9). Saul understands this experience as demanding a personal response from him in turn, and asks, "What shall I do, Lord?" (Acts 22: 10).

Along with divine guidance, Saul needs human assistance. Literally blinded by his vision, he cannot "see for the glory of that light" (Acts 22: 11). Thus, to follow God's command to "go into Damascus," Saul must be physically "led by the hand of them that were with [him]" (Acts 22: 10–11). In Damascus, Ananias restores Saul's sight, and leads him metaphorically by the hand, explaining that God has chosen Saul. Despite having heard God's voice, Saul needs a human interpreter to explain its implications, prefiguring the clergy's role in helping the convert to recognize his conversion and to understand his new life. This new life includes enhanced powers of perception: Ananias promises that Saul will "know [God's] will, and see that Just One, and . . . hear the voice of his mouth" (Acts 22: 14). Saul's transformation is marked by ritual; Ananias instructs Saul to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord," embedding the private spiritual experience in a communal framework (Acts 22: 16). Moreover, Saul must share his experience with others, for God has chosen him "to be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard" (Acts 22: 15).

In Acts 9, Saul obeys this injunction immediately, "straightway . . . preach[ing] Christ in the synagogues" (Acts 9: 20). Renamed Paul, he later relates his experiences to a hostile crowd, establishing the connection between narrative and conversion (Acts 22). Paul's conversion allows him to proselytize through miracle (as in Acts 13: 9–12) and through narrative. Indeed, Saul is transformed into the Apostle Paul, author of epistles offering spiritual counsel to other Christians and potential converts.

Augustine of Hippo (354–430), whose *Confessions* influenced many later narratives, presents his conversion as linked both to reading the Pauline epistles and to hearing accounts of other converts. When Augustine seeks his guidance, the bishop Simplicianus describes the conversion of Victorinus, who was swayed by studying the Bible and "all Christian literature" (Augustine 1961: 8.2.160). Augustine is moved by this story, and "glow[s] with fervour to imitate" Victorinus, explaining that "This, of course, was why Simplicianus had told it to me" (ibid: 8.5.164). As in Paul's case, a conversion narrative generates further conversions.

Yet Augustine's fervor is hampered by his "own will, which had the strength of iron chains," and he describes a period of spiritual "warfare," in which triumphs of the human will alternate with moments of spiritual clarity (ibid: 8.5.164). In the pattern which many later converts will follow in their own narratives, Augustine describes repeated instances of backsliding, followed by real if incremental progress: "Yet I did not fall back into my old state. I stood on the brink of resolution, waiting to take fresh breath. I tried again and came a little nearer to my goal, and then a little nearer still, so that I could almost reach out and grasp it" (ibid: 8.11.175). Still,

Augustine describes himself as chained to his will; he remains untransformed (ibid: 8.11.175).

When transformation comes, it is not incremental, but rather dramatic and decisive:

> I was asking myself these questions, weeping all the while with the most bitter sorrow in my heart, when all at once I heard the sing-song voice of a child in a nearby house. Whether it was the voice of a boy or a girl I cannot say, but again and again it repeated the refrain "Take it and read, take it and read" . . . I stemmed my flood of tears and stood up, telling myself that this could only be a divine command to open my book of Scripture and read the first passage on which my eyes should fall. (Ibid: 8.12.177)

Augustine's conversion is thus linked to reading. A divine voice sends him to the biblical text itself, specifically to Paul's Epistle to the Romans. Augustine's reading is accompanied by a dramatic spiritual change: "I had no wish to read more and no need to do so. For in an instant, as I came to the end of the sentence, it was as though the light of confidence flooded into my heart and all the darkness of doubt was dispelled" (ibid: 8.12.178). Reading is bound to the transformation of the heart, and leaves Augustine with "no need" to "read more."

Instead, the convert is empowered as author. Just as Simplicianus tells the story of Victorinus to foster Augustine's spiritual progress, Augustine in turn envisions his own narrative promulgating faith. Indeed, R. S. Pine-Coffin notes a correspondence between "the arrangement of the *Confessions*" and Augustine's plan for the instruction of converts as articulated in *De catechizandis rudibus*, his guide for catechists (Pine-Coffin 1961: 15). In his *Confessions*, then, Augustine both responds to the narratives of Paul and Victorinus and positions his own narrative in this line of spiritually efficacious narratives.

This, too, becomes paradigmatic. The conversion narrative balances individual experience and larger Christian history. It presents the convert's experience as individual and idiosyncratic, while connecting the individual convert with both paradigmatic predecessors and future converts. As Anne Hunsaker Hawkins explains, "Spiritual autobiography [of which conversion narrative is a form] is predicated on the relationship between a particular individual, living in a certain place and in a certain time, and a divine reality that is universal and timeless" (Hawkins 1985: 24). This relationship is literary, as well as spiritual. Just as earlier Christians stand as model converts, conversion narratives typically cite earlier narratives as paradigms and sometimes provocations, and in turn position themselves as spiritually useful for later readers. In the words of Thomas Godwin, "that God pardon'd such a Man in such a Condition, is often brought home unto another Man in the same Condition" (Godwin 1704 V: xii; qtd. Watkins 1972: 2). Convert begets convert, and narrative begets narrative.

These narratives share common features across religious, national, and gender lines. Shaped by the paradigms of Paul and Augustine, almost all include descriptions of the

pre-conversion state, often with vivid descriptions of sinful behavior and extravagant self-recrimination. Conversion narratives describe specific changes, both small steps along the way and powerful moments of spiritual transformation. As Hawkins notes, author-converts often use journeys both structurally and thematically, metaphorically "represent[ing] life as a long pilgrimage, or journey," or describing the hardships of literal migrations (Hawkins 1985: 13). Like Paul and Augustine, many authors describe clergymen who help to shape their spiritual development. And many stress the importance of Bible reading, not only as a prelude to conversion, but also as a way of gauging spiritual transformation.

Despite these common patterns, narratives reflect their authors' diverse temperaments and affiliations. Some converts describe sudden and spectacular transformations, while others describe gradual development, sometimes without decisive conclusions. For some converts, the process follows a smooth trajectory, while others describe conversions that proceed by fits and starts, with significant backsliding. Catholic and Quaker writers often describe dreams and visions, while Puritan writers tend to be wary of visions and instead describe moments of conviction and comfort. Clerical influences range from inspiring sermons by Puritan ministers to more direct counsel by the confessors of Catholic nuns. Representations of ritual vary as well, with Catholic writers emphasizing the sacraments and Puritan writers emphasizing instead the ritual functions of Bible reading and preaching. Moreover, while Paul and Augustine offer paradigms for Protestant and Catholic converts, each community of convert-authors had its own particular narrative models. For Puritan writers, the writings of eminent divines – and the authors' lives often published with them – shaped narrative conventions, while the writings of Teresa of Avila (1515–82) were central for Spanish nuns. Converts consciously and deliberately placed their own experiences, and their own narratives, within longstanding narrative traditions.

Conversion, Reading, and Narrative Power

Many conversion narratives emphasize their own status as texts, as well as the converts' transformed relations to reading and writing. Quaker Elizabeth Ashbridge's (1713–55) narrative offers a dramatic example. Ashbridge describes a vision of "a Long Roll wrote in Black Characters, at sight whereof I heard a voice say to me, 'this is thy Sins' " (Ashbridge 1990: 156). Ashbridge links spiritual and textual transformation, embodying the blackness of her personal character in printed characters. Reading proves pivotal in Ashbridge's conversion process. As she is both curious and "much for reading," she picks up "a Quakers' Book" which she finds "lying on the Table":

> So resolved to read, but had not read two Pages before my very heart burned within me and Tears Issued from my Eyes, which I was Afraid would be seen; therefore with the Book (Saml. Crisp's Two Letters) I walked into the garden, sat Down, and the piece

> being Small, read it through before I went in; but Some Times was forced to Stop to Vent my Tears, my heart as it were uttering . . . involuntary Expressions [to God]. (Ashbridge 1990: 158–9)

This episode contains several familiar elements. Ashbridge's spiritual transformation occurs as she reads a religious text. Reading produces a strong emotional response that requires physical expression through "involuntary" tears. The experience leads her to retreat to the garden, following Augustine's model. It prompts new spiritual explorations which culminate some weeks later in her setting her "heart open to receive the truth in the Love of it," after which "the Lord in his own good time revealed to my Soul not only the Beauty there is in Truth, & how those should shine that continue faithful to it, but also the Emptiness of all shadows" (ibid: 160). Thus, reading a human-authored book leads to powerful spiritual change, and ultimately to direct revelation from God.

Moreover, Ashbridge's spiritual change transforms her from reader to narrator. She reports that "the time was near that he would require me to go forth & declare to others what he the God of Mercy had done for my Soul." Ashbridge resists this pressure, "for fear I should bring dishonour to the truth, and cause his Holy name to be Evil spoken of" (ibid: 160). Eventually, Ashbridge does speak at a meeting, casting her public narrative as an act of obedience and submission to God's will: "I being then Sure it was God that Spoke said, 'thy will O God, be done, I am in thy hand; do with me according to thy Word,' & gave up" (ibid: 167). Ashbridge articulates less anxiety about describing her experiences in writing, thinking it "proper to make some remarks on the Dealings of Divine Goodness to me." Spiritually transformed, Ashbridge identifies with biblical figures of authorship, such as David, and willingly takes an authoritative tone with her readers: "most earnestly I desire that whosoever reads the following lines, may take warning and shun the Evils that I have thro' the Deceitfulness of Satan been drawn into" (ibid: 147). Conversion both authorizes and demands narrative performance.

For Ursuline nun Marie de l'Incarnation (Marie Guyart, 1599–1672), narrative performances produced by conversion blur the boundaries between the convert and God. In *The Relation of 1654* Marie treats conversion as a movement into a state of clarity and vision. The vision which Marie identifies as her conversion occurs as she prays on her way to work, echoing Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus:

> Suddenly I was brought stock-still, both inwardly and outwardly. Even my thoughts were abruptly brushed aside. Then, in an instant, my inner eyes were opened and all the faults, sins, and imperfections that I had committed since my birth were shown to me in the most vivid detail: so clear and distinct were they that no human certainty could have expressed them thus. At the same moment I saw myself immersed in the blood of the Son of God, shed because of the sins which had been shown to me; and furthermore, realizing that it was for my salvation that this Precious Blood had been shed. (Guyart 1989: 49 n. 1)

The transformation literally stops Marie in her tracks, and she returns home from it "changed into another person – and so powerfully changed that I did not even recognize myself" (ibid: 51). Marie's powers of perception are enhanced; from this point forward, she can see clearly both God's goodness and her own sin. Moreover, she perceives her expressive limitation, and indeed human limitation more generally. "No human language can express this," she asserts, though the experience produces an "urge to confess [her] sins" (ibid: 49).

Even as Marie's conversion reveals the inadequacy of human language, it transforms her relation to the Bible. She represents herself as experiencing "union with the sacred Word Incarnate." God gives her "the precepts of the Gospel as [her] guiding principle," but not through ordinary reading. Instead, "Without my either studying or reasoning or reflecting on them voluntarily, they came to my spirit spontaneously without my having read about them previously" (ibid: 159–60). For Marie, the Bible becomes a singularly fluid text. She describes the preached word as rendering her heart "like a vessel in which this divine word flowed like liquid," emphasizing that "This was not my imagination but rather the power of the Spirit of God who himself was in this divine word and who, by a movement of grace, produced this effect in my soul" (ibid: 42). Marie notes that "the action of the Spirit also changes according to the state the soul is entering. Thus a passage from Holy Scripture will mean one thing at one time and have a completely different sense at another," as the "unchangeable" God interacts with "the soul which matures in holiness to the end of its life" (ibid: 160). Marie's union with the "Word Incarnate" empowers her as a reader, enabling her to interpret and internalize scriptural passages.

Marie is also divinely empowered as a speaker, and marvels at her ability to pray: "Without my ever having been instructed in prayer and mortification – I did not even know these terms – he [God] taught me everything, letting me experience the one and practice the other" (ibid: 53). Similarly, Marie locates the impetus for narrative outside of herself. She opens her *Relation* by emphasizing that she is impelled to write by her spiritual director, Father Raymond de Saint-Bernard, whose authority is divine: "Having been ordered by him who holds the place of God for me – in order to guide me in his ways – to write whatever is possible concerning the graces it has pleased his Divine Majesty to give me in prayer, I shall begin my obedience for his honor and glory, in the name of the adorable Word Incarnate, my heavenly and divine Spouse" (ibid: 41). Later, she closes a section by noting "I did not intend to write all this but the Spirit led me to do so" (ibid: 77). The Spirit thus transforms Marie's relationship to reading and text, enabling her prayers and her narrative.

The conversion of María de San José enables her reading more literally. Following her encounter with the Virgin, María "hear[s] an interior locution as if someone were telling . . . [her], 'Go out to the sitting room, for in the lesson from the book your brother is reading, you will receive light as to the way of life you must lead.' " As she listens to "everything in that Rule, it seemed it was being imprinted and stamped in my heart and my memory," establishing the importance of reading in María's *vida*

(María 1999: 20). María represents literacy itself as a miraculous gift. Though she knows only the letters of the alphabet, María learns to read in

> only a very few days, because my Father Saint Anthony of Padua worked the miracle right away of obtaining my ability to read from Our Lord, without its costing me any labor at all, nor any delay that would lose time. Without knowing how it happened, I found myself reading at full speed, which I took as a great miracle of the mercy of Our Lord God by the intercession of my glorious Father Saint Anthony. (Ibid: 28)

Miraculously enabled, María echoes Augustine, retreating to a "room in the garden" to read saints' lives and guides to meditation (ibid: 29).

Similarly, María represents writing as divinely inspired. Even before she learns to read, María hears a "voice that spoke in the interior of my soul" commanding her to record her experience: "write it down, for everything comes from Me and nothing from you" (ibid: 27). God himself instructs her to write, and when she hesitates, the same interior voice reassures her "that the powerful hand of the Lord is working in these writings" (ibid: 37). Like Ashbridge and Marie de l'Incarnation, María finds that her conversion demands narrative expression.

Conversion Narratives and Clerical Mediation

While María describes her writing as coming entirely from God and "nothing from" herself, her obedience to a voice both "interior" and external complicates the sense of compulsion described by many converts (María 1999: 27). The narrative is represented as divine utterance rather than as self-expression, simultaneously effacing and aggrandizing the convert. Often, this dynamic is further complicated by the role of clergy who instruct converts to write or relate their experiences. While such instruction allowed clergy to monitor and guide converts' religious experience, Electa Arenal and Stacey Schlau suggest that it also permitted converts to express their own desires. They argue that often

> the impulse to write came first from the author herself or from one of her Sisters. She might claim that God had made the request in a vision or a revelation. Reported to the confessor, the impulse would then be transformed into a request from him with which the nun could humbly comply. Often, she would claim the "Lord Himself" had issued the order. Most women were ordered to write, often as a result of such deliberate stratagems. (Arenal and Schlau 1990: 28)

Professions of compulsion were not always stratagems, of course. They could also be markers of writers' anxiety that authoring an autobiographical narrative betrayed inappropriate self-assertion.

In Puritan New England, Thomas Shepard expressed this anxiety very clearly, cautioning his congregants that "a long story of conversion" may be an effort to

"covertly commend" oneself. The enterprise is risky, for "myself ever comes in," and "the secret meaning is, I pray admire me" (Shepard 1990: 284). Yet Shepard saw conversion and narrative power as firmly linked, and he presumed that true converts would be able to describe their conversions. Like many New England ministers, he required a "formal conversion 'relation' . . . to be spoken or read to the entire congregation . . . before admission as evidence of the applicant's visible sainthood" (Caldwell 1983: 1).

Shepard urged his congregants to keep their narratives spare, limiting the intrusions of the idiosyncratic self. The assembled congregation should not be "held long with relations of this odd thing and the other, nor hear of revelations and groundless joys, nor . . . heap up all the particular passages of their lives, wherein they have got any good." Even "scriptures and sermons" should be described sparingly, and only "such as may be of special use unto the people of God, such things as tend to show, Thus was I humbled, then thus was I called, then thus have I walked, though with many weaknesses since; and such special providences of God I have seen, temptations gone through; and thus the Lord hath delivered me, blessed be his name, etc." (Shepard 1990: 631).

The narratives recorded in Shepard's notebook reveal that his congregants largely conformed to the formal requirements he prescribed (Shepard 1981). Converts describe passage from sinful self to godly convert, relating spiritual experiences linked to reading and sermons, and moments of enabled reading that bring comfort. Like Shepard's own *Autobiography*, however, these narratives often emphasize persistent "weaknesses" and lingering doubts (Shepard 1990: 631; Caldwell 1983: 33–4). Jane Holmes, for example, records that she "was endeared to the Lord and thought if it might ever be thus yet since fears, seeing greatness of the sin I am turned from" (Shepard 1981: 80).

Such similarities need not reflect congregants' cynical negotiation of their minister's admission requirements. Certainly, as Arenal and Schlau (1990) suggest, narrative paradigms could be manipulated by savvy writers. But narrative paradigms also helped Christian writers to understand their own experiences. It is not surprising that Shepard's congregants shaped their narratives in accordance with his views of conversion and conversion narrative; their narrative activity reflected their attempts to understand their own confusing spiritual experiences in the context of Shepard's preaching. Their narratives did not function simply to gain them admission to the church, for they understood the process of composing conversion narratives in light of "Paul's injunction to 'Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith' " (2 Corinthians 13: 5; qtd. Watkins 1972: 10). In composing their narratives, converts could convince themselves that their conversions were genuine; in Patricia Caldwell's words, "the speaker, no matter how humble and how little trained in the art of rhetoric, is usually able to put together some kind of coherent prose narrative about what God has done for him, the very process of doing which may help to reassure him that he is indeed saved" (Caldwell 1983: 24). Relating their narratives to congregation and minister intensified that reassurance, as acceptance into church membership validated and

legitimated the converts' experiences. Thus the requirement to narrate a conversion produced both anxiety and assurance, allowing both pastoral control and lay expression.

American Narratives

New world narratives are often marked by distinctive American issues and experiences. As the familiar archetype of the journey finds a literal counterpart in transatlantic migration, narratives often link migration and conversion, emphasizing the relationship between physical and spiritual trials and transformations (Hawkins 1985: 13; Caldwell 1983: 28). Converts explain their decisions to migrate and express hope, in Caldwell's words, "to be pure and new and whole in a new and holy place." Migrants' narratives refer to migration not only by describing the physical voyage, but also through "figures of sea, ship, towns, churches, and ministers and indirectly by intricate scriptural reference." Moreover, argues Caldwell, migrants' children show "an excruciating self-consciousness about the first generation" (Caldwell 1983: 26).

In *The Puritan Conversion Narrative*, Caldwell describes distinctive features of American Puritan conversion narratives. She argues that in "American narratives . . . deliverance is imaginatively mediated and substantively affected by a real geographical place" (Caldwell 1983: 26). She finds the movements of American narratives less personal, as the "private person [expands] into the public figure of Israel." Moreover, she finds American narratives "much more closely knit with Scripture," with "Scriptural passages becom[ing] structural elements of the narrative," and the narrator moving "through the Bible, almost as through a physical space" (ibid: 30–1).

Caldwell also identifies "a pattern of asymmetry or discontent, usually launched by the ritual statement that 'after I came hither I saw my condition more miserable than ever.' " "Such complaints," Caldwell finds, "become established as a new literary convention" (ibid: 31). "A kind of grim, gray disappointment . . . emerges . . . as an almost obligatory structural element," along with a pattern of "limp and irresolute endings" not fully explained by "fear of enthusiasm," or by anxiety about describing one's conversion to the minister (ibid: 31, 33–4). Instead, Caldwell sees these endings as reflecting a distinctly American comfort "with ambivalence and open-endedness" (ibid: 33–4).

Thus, Elizabeth Olbon of Shepard's Cambridge congregation laments that "[s]ince she came hither she hath found her heart more dead and dull etc." Though she has "witnessed the Lord's love to her," she closes her confession by noting that she has "Sometime a heart to run and sometime to sit still in the Lord's way" (Shepard 1981: 41). Nathaniel Eaton (ca. 1609–74), whose new world difficulties included dismissal from his Harvard position for embezzlement and beating his students, closes his narrative on a similarly mixed note: "Only since I came hither, I have not found my heart to walk so closely with God as I should; and when my heart hath been ready to cast off all, the Lord hath awakened me and hath not suffered me to relapse but to rise

again, etc., and persuaded me that the seeds cast upon me shall last unto eternal life" (Shepard 1981: 53, 57). Shepard himself details American ordeals, including the voyage itself, the Antinomian Controversy, and the Pequot War, and ends his *Autobiography* on a note of poignant incapacity. Having described his wife's death, he concludes: "Thus God hath visited and scourged me for my sins and sought to wean me from this world, but I have ever found it a difficult thing to profit even a little by the sorest and sharpest afflictions" (Shepard 1994: 73).

Other migrants found the new world physically and spiritually difficult as well. Marie de l'Incarnation experiences a divine commandment to undertake missionary work in Canada, but describes her mission in terms of suffering and sacrifice (Guyart 1989: 119). Three days before her departure, Marie has a terrifying vision of Canada: "crosses without end: interior abandonment by God, a crucifying trial from creatures, and a life in which I would be hidden and unknown." Even God is figured as violent and terrifying, "piercing [her] through with his words" and demanding "proof" of Marie's "fidelity" (ibid: 129–30).

Marie describes her travels in terms of both terror and divine trial. "The whole period of our crossing," she writes, "was for me a continual sacrifice during which I offered myself day and night in our constant dangers as a holocaust to our divine spouse" (ibid: 133). Yet, throughout the voyage, Marie notes that her "heart and soul remained in the most profound peace and tranquility," and reports "that when God has won our hearts, there is pleasure in suffering" (ibid: 133, 135).

In Quebec, however, Marie finds the "peace [she] had enjoyed during the voyage . . . very far away – a very painful and crucifying sensation for the human spirit" (ibid: 140). She sees herself "plunged into hell, full of sadness and bitterness arising from a temptation to despair which was born in a darkness [she] did not understand," and endures a divinely ordained "purgatory more penetrating than lightning" (ibid: 141–2). In spiritual crisis, Marie fears that she is returning "to the way of the world and back into that state from which [God] had delivered her" (ibid: 144). After describing her spiritual torments, lamenting her sins, and praising God for his mercies, Marie reports restoration of her lost "peace" (ibid: 161). Yet she closes her *Relation* by declaring "My lack of fidelity causes me – and rightly so – to fear," requesting divine cleansing and saintly intercession (ibid: 178). Thus for Marie, as for the converts Caldwell describes, America is a site of physical hardship and spiritual anxiety.

Converting Native Americans

For Marie de l'Incarnation, the prospect of bringing Christianity to the Native Americans of Quebec justified her suffering. Like other French and Spanish missionaries and some English colonists as well, she saw the propagation of the gospel as a consequence of her own conversion and an important element of her new world religious experience. Yet accounts of missionary activity often demonstrate the ironies

of the missionary enterprise. Conversion from another faith theoretically required both assent to Christianity and spiritual transformation. Many missionaries saw these changes as linked, with God's help essential to both. French Jesuit Paul Le Jeune (1592–1664), for example, explains that "it is necessary to have the *piam motionem* [godly motion] in order to consent to the propositions of our faith; the will must be softened and must give up its natural hardness. This is done by the gentle breathing or stirring of the Holy Spirit, which leads us to believe" (Le Jeune 1959: 273). While "God does more in a moment than all men can do in a hundred years," Le Jeune nevertheless laments that converts seem sometimes to stick at the stage of intellectual assent:

> I daily see men who are convinced of this truth, that our belief is good, that it is holy, that it conforms to reason; and, after all that, seeing no conclusions drawn from these premises, I exclaim, "What have we done to God that he gives us this Faith, which enters with so much difficulty into the souls of these poor Savages!" (Ibid: 273–5)

The difficulties faced by missionaries were in part religious and cultural, but also in part narrative. If, as they assumed, genuine conversions often produced both a narrative impulse and narrative skill, then ideally native converts would produce their own conversion narratives. For this to occur, language and literary genre had to be mastered along with faith. Some accounts substitute pointed summaries of converts' experiences for first-person conversion narratives, as in Le Jeune's description of a young man who "listens eagerly to what he already believes; he is full of regret at the goodness of him who has so gently vanquished him" (ibid: 275). Missionaries also marked converts' transformations with signs such as renaming and baptism. In some Jesuit narratives, accounts of conversion are strikingly compressed, proceeding almost directly from first contact to baptism, as described by Father Eusebio Kino: "They listened with pleasure to these and other talks concerning God, heaven, and hell, and told me that they wished to be Christians, and gave me some infants to baptize" (Kino 1948: 123). Kino presents little evidence that baptism is preceded by spiritual transformation.

As they struggled to present narrative evidence that their converts were being transformed, missionaries often traced changes in themselves. Marie details the Ursulines' efforts to transform Native American children spiritually and physically, but describes more profound transformations in herself and her colleagues. She studies Algonquian, Montagnais, and Huron languages "enough to be able to teach the prayers and catechism to the girls and women" (Guyart 1989: 162). Instructing the converts, then, requires her to learn their culture. Moreover, she explains, "My study became a prayer which made this language no longer barbarous but sweet to me," figuring the languages themselves as converts, but locating that conversion in herself (ibid: 137). Marie describes more practical transformations as well, noting that "During the six years that I was superior, we learned what we could and could not do and how to adjust the rules of our institute to this country" (ibid: 151). In spirit and in routine,

missionaries found themselves perhaps as much transformed as those they hoped to convert.

Yet European missionaries continued to imagine native American conversions as fully narrated as their own. John Eliot (1604–90) addresses his *Indian Dialogues* (1671) to Native American Indian converts embarking on missionary work. He presents his dialogues as rooted in fact: they are "partly historical, or some things that were done and said." Yet they are also "partly instructive," reflecting Eliot's sense of "what might or should have been said, or that may be (by the Lord's assistance) hereafter done and said." Eliot connects these imagined dialogues to English literacy, hoping that "learned Indians" will read his book and use it to convert their brethren (Eliot 1980: 61).

Eliot's sense of the gap between historical and hypothetical is revealed by accounts of Waban, a Native American convert, in the *Indian Dialogues* and *Tears of Repentance* (1653), which Eliot co-authored with Thomas Mayhew (1621–57). In *Tears of Repentance* Eliot purports to offer translations of Native American confessions as actually delivered, including a confession by Waban, who is described as "a great drawer on to Religion." Though skilled at presenting Christianity to his own people, Waban delivers a "Confession . . . not so satisfactory as was desired." In fact, Waban laments, "I fear that I shall not beleeve a great while, and very slowly; I do not know what grace is in my own heart." Waban's conversion is nevertheless accepted as genuine, largely because Eliot testifies that "his gift [was] not so much in expressing himself this way" but rather in his skill as a missionary, and "in Ruling, Judging of Cases, wherein he is patient, constant, and prudent . . . much respected among [the Indians]" (Eliot and Mayhew 1653: s.p. 8).

The character Waban who appears in Eliot's *Indian Dialogues* may be modeled on the Waban of *Tears of Repentance* (Bross 2004: 118–19). Yet in imagining a conversation between Waban and the unconverted Peneovot, Eliot endows both speakers with considerable expressive skill. Waban describes his spiritual experiences to Peneovot, incorporating many conventions of conversion narrative. He expresses loathing for his past life, acknowledges the "Word of God," and affirms that he has "entered" the "way to eternal life and salvation." Moreover, he expresses his "desire to persuade all others into the same way," and "exhort[s] and entreat[s]" his listeners to "[f]orsake [their] old ways of sin . . . and turn unto God" (Eliot 1980: 95–6).

In Eliot's *Indian Dialogues*, Waban's narrative skips over the dramatic moment of conversion itself; he simply announces that he has "left . . . [his] old *Indian* customs" and "come into the light" (Eliot 1980: 95–6). But the narrative provokes such a moment for Peneovot, who exclaims, "O I am surprised, I am amazed. You have ravished my soul. You have brought a light into my soul" (ibid: 96). This extravagant declaration connects Waban's narrative with divine illumination, and marks the beginning of Peneovot's conversion. As narrative convention demands, Peneovot immediately turns his gaze backward and inward. He describes his past experience in terms of darkness and death, and identifies Waban and his narrative as sources of illumination and understanding: "I wonder at myself. Where have I been? What have

I done? I am like one raised out of a dark pit. You have brought me forth into the sunshine. I begin to see about me. If I look back, and down into the pit where I have been all my days, I wonder at myself what dead dark thing I have been" (ibid: 96–7). In contrast to the tomb of Peneovot's past life, Waban is "like an angel of light," and his "discourse" helps Peneovot "to see what an excellent thing [prayer] is." Peneovot stresses the power of prayer to "[change] men," using language of illumination and sight to emphasize his enabled perception (ibid: 97).

Peneovot's metaphors demonstrate that he has also been empowered as a narrator. Echoing Jesus' call to become "fishers of men," Peneovot links everyday experience with biblical narrative: "You have dealt with me like as fishers do by the fish. You laid a bait for me to make me desire it, and bite at it. But I saw not your hook, until you had catch'd my soul. And now I am catch'd, I see it was not for my hurt, but for my great good" (ibid: 97; see Matthew 4: 19). Eliot represents his converts incorporating biblical imagery into their narratives, using linguistic mastery as evidence of spiritual transformation (Gordis 2003: 196).

Throughout his *Indian Dialogues* Eliot emphasizes the connection between conversion and literacy. Waban frequently quotes from the Bible, and has a young man read the Bible to Peneovot (Eliot 1980: 99). Moreover, he assumes that Peneovot will learn to read, instructing him to "get the help of others, and learn the Word of God by heart" (ibid: 109). He also stresses the importance of teaching children to read (ibid: 109–10). Peneovot laments his own late start, but confidently announces: "I doubt it will be difficult for me to learn to read. I am full of capacity" (ibid: 109). For Eliot, Native Americans' capacities for literacy, conversion, and missionary work were intertwined. Eliot's *Indian Dialogues* answered skeptics who wondered whether "praying Indians" were truly Christian by representing them narrating their conversions at least as skillfully as their English counterparts. That Native Americans could learn faith was confirmed by their mastery of the conversion narrative as a genre.

Narrative Transformed

Eliot's imagined narratives found real counterparts not only in *Tears of Repentance*, but also in conversion narratives and collections of confessions by Native American ministers, including Samson Occom's *A Short Narrative of My Life* (composed in 1768) and William Apess' *The Experiences of Five Christian Indians of the Pequot Tribe* (1833). These writers often modified or transformed the genre, in the words of Joanna Brooks, "reveal[ing] how religious formulas such as conversion, revival, and resurrection answered the alienating and mortifying effects of slavery, colonialism, and racial oppression" (Brooks 2003: 9). That the genre lent itself to such transformation preserved its vitality, and extended its impact into other genres, such as slave narrative and even lyric poetry.

Thus, Frederick Douglass (1818–95) borrows the language of Christian conversion to describe his faith in freedom. He recasts conventions of conversion narrative to

present his battle with an overseer as a crucial "turning point," a "glorious resurrection, from the tomb of slavery, to the heaven of freedom" (Douglass 2001: 54). The Christian "new man" is replaced by Douglass' "revived . . . manhood," as Douglass shows his reader "how a slave was made a man" (ibid: 54, 50). Douglass emphasizes his radical transformation, reporting that he "felt as . . . [he] never felt before," and, like the Christian convert, no longer feared death. Moreover, he appropriates language of inspiration and Christian resurrection to describe his revived determination and courage. He, not Christ, is resurrected – and by the force of his own physical and mental strength; he emphasizes that he "himself" repels "the bloody arm of slavery" (ibid: 54). Rather than effacing the self and relying on God, as the traditional convert would, Douglass asserts himself and relies on his own power.

In her poems, Emily Dickinson (1830–86), too, transforms the genre of the conversion narrative, inverting the narrative practices of her Puritan ancestors to describe failed conversions in which "The Mighty Merchant sneer[s]" at the speaker's requests (Dickinson 1998: 687, l. 4). Dickinson pictures conversion as a "fond Ambush," with God playing a perilous game of peekaboo in which the violence of the "Ambush" risks outstripping its "fond[ness]" (ibid: 365, l. 6). And, reversing the roles imagined by European missionaries, she represents God as a warrior who "Deals – One – imperial – Thunderbolt – / That scalps your naked Soul" (ibid: 477, ll. 11–12). The lightning bolt that instructed Madré María in the workings of divine mercy two centuries earlier is transformed by Dickinson into an image of divine savagery, and God (rather than the Devil) becomes the powerful racial Other.

Douglass' account of his self-transformation and Dickinson's descriptions of failed or violent conversions suggest that the figure of conversion maintained its hold on American writers long past the colonial period. In revising the genre of conversion narrative, Douglass and Dickinson continue the work of earlier writers. For even as colonial conversion narratives marked their authors' spiritual progress, they testified to the ways in which migrants and Native Americans were changed by their encounters, reshaping narrative conventions as they recorded transformations of their souls.

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23
Indigenous Literacies: New England and New Spain

Hilary E. Wyss

In 1519, when Cortez and his army got to the Central American urban center Tenochtitlan, or what we now call Mexico City, they found just what they were looking for: extraordinary wealth in the hands of a people remarkably like themselves – hierarchical, and with all the familiar markers of culture like social stratification and literacy. Having traveled far beyond the bounds of the known world of early modern Spain, soldier Bernal Díaz del Castillo marveled at this exotic place's similarity to what he already knew. Upon seeing what was by many accounts the unparalleled central market of Tenochtitlan, he exclaims: "You could see every kind of merchandise to be found in the whole of New Spain, laid out in the same way as goods are laid out in my own district of Medina del Campo, a market town where each line of stalls has its own particular sort" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 48). And yet within three years of Cortez and his army's arrival on the Mexican coast, the indigenous empire that had ruled most of central Mexico was defeated and the extraordinary city of Tenochtitlan lay in ruins. Confident that they fully understood the world of the Nahuas, or Aztecs, the Spaniards tried to destroy it, believing it to be a dark reflection of their own civilization, surely inspired by Satan.

Over a hundred years later, when William Bradford and his fellow *Mayflower* travelers landed on the coast of what was to become New England's Plymouth Plantation, they found just what they hoped for: an empty land scarcely populated by clearly inferior beings with no culture to speak of. Bradford mourned, on seeing the new land before him, that it was "but a hideous and desolate wilderness" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 259), clearly in need of good, hearty Protestants like himself to work the land. Both the Spanish and the English colonists, we agree today, were proved wrong about many of their assumptions. Certainly, today, we dismiss the notion that the Nahuas, characterized by the invaders as devil-worshipers, were so

easily comprehensible to the Spanish, and we readily agree that the land that William Bradford and others claimed was hardly empty, nor were the inhabitants of that land bereft of culture.

What the Spanish and then later the English explorers found, of course, were vibrant cultures with their own histories, their own traditions, and their own systems and structures of value. The values of these cultures were of little interest to the colonizers, however; instead, the colonists felt it their duty to replace the "imperfect" cultures of Native peoples along the northeastern coast of what is now the United States and of the people of central Mexico with their own. The set of assumptions that the colonizers brought with them about culture, religion, and the certainty of a universal hierarchy have been explored in some depth by historians; what has received less attention, however, is the place of literacy in all this, or what a modern scholar has called "the culture of the book" (Mignolo 1995:76). Often overlooked, the assumptions about reading, writing, and their relationship to culture were central to the systems of rationalization through which colonists attempted to refigure the people and landscape they claimed for themselves.

Literacy

Theories of literacy, so crucial to understanding the colonizing efforts in New Spain and New England, have been much debated in recent years, especially in terms of literacy's relationship to culture. For certain scholars, literacy has a transformative power; it quite literally changes the way people organize their world. Intellectuals like Walter Ong and Jack Goody have argued that a fundamental alteration occurs in the literate individual's orientation to the outside world, including the shift to abstract thinking, social isolation, and the rise of impersonal "bureaucratic" structures. Such generally applicable consequences of literacy, these scholars argue, clearly affect the nature of social development among literate and non-literate people, and the implication is clear that literate societies are far more intellectually sophisticated than non-literate ones (Cushman et al. 2001: 19–31, 32–51). This is especially the case, according to this model, for those societies which have achieved the "pinnacle" of literacy, which is an alphabetic system – the gold standard of literacy.

In some ways this twentieth-century view reflects longstanding assumptions about literacy and culture dating back as far as Aristotle and certainly reflected in early modern Europe, especially during the respective colonizations of New Spain and New England. The Spanish missionaries who arrived in New Spain shortly after Cortez's brutal conquest of Mexico City in the early sixteenth century had very clear ideas about the meaning and value of literacy, and they struggled to place Nahuatl pictographic "books" in their hierarchy; some argued that the Aztecs were "a people without writing, without letters, without written characters, and without any kind of enlightenment" (qt. in Mignolo 1995: 45) because of the lack of an alphabet, while

others argued that the presence of Aztec books revealed the potential that these people held for conversion from devil-worship to Christianity.

Certainly the relationship between literacy and culture was clear for John Eliot in New England. When he wrote his "Indian Grammar" in 1666, he promised to "bring the Indian language into rules" and thereby save those "Ruines of Mankinde" (the indigenous people of New England) from their chaotic pre-literate (and therefore pre-Christian) state. For him, as for his fellow Englishmen, historian David Cressy notes, "literacy" and "civility" were indivisible in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Cressy explains that contemporary English ministers connected "rudeness, licentiousness, profaneness, superstition and any wickedness" with the inability to read and write. In addition, he writes, both in the colonies and in England there was a firm belief that "literacy and education could combat 'misorders' and 'disobedience' and could promote 'policy and civility' " (Cressy 1983: 24, 25). Alphabetic literacy, in this view, is linked with all that we think of as high culture, while its absence suggested nothing short of chaos. In fact, until very recently, literacy was conceived as an evolutionary system, with alphabetic writing based on spoken language as the very height of human achievement, and all other forms of graphic communication decidedly lower on the scale. With this assumption in place it is not hard to conclude that societies whose literacy systems are "lower" on the evolutionary scale are also lower in any number of ways – a belief that was certainly a convenient justification for the European conquests of New Spain and New England.

This longstanding perspective on literacy has come under attack on a number of fronts. On a practical level, anthropologists Sylvia Scribner and Michael Cole, among others, warn against a facile application of these universalizing ideas about literacy. Documenting a range of literate activity in a variety of social and cultural situations, they argue that there can be no universal "consequence of literacy"; instead, each situation will produce its own set of practices and characteristics, all of which are contingent on the larger social system in place (Cushman et al. 2001: 136–7). This argument dramatically undercuts the evolutionary theory of literacy – one that has always positioned the European model of alphabetic literacy at the top with all other cultures gradually working their way towards a system just like it. By stressing that the social context in which literacy occurs will determine the effects of literacy rather than any universal qualities of all literacy situations, Scribner and Cole allow for a wide variety of literacy models rather than a single one.

Furthermore, the precise nature of literacy and print culture has come into question. Even within the relatively narrow confines of Anglo-American culture, what we think of as "literacy" – the ability to read and write – has not remained static over time. For most colonial people, as E. J. Monaghan and others have pointed out, the skill of reading was quite detached from the ability to write, and until the eighteenth century, for most early Americans (as for most Europeans) writing was considered better suited to boys than girls, while reading was a more generalized practice (Monaghan 1989: 53). Tamara Plakins Thornton has uncovered some of the layers of social and cultural meaning attached to penmanship and writing in the

colonial world that have largely been lost to us (Cushman et al. 2001: 52–69). Indeed, as David Hall points out, "literacy" could refer to "the Latin-based world of academic learning" that was a sign of "the politics of privilege," or it could refer simply to the act of reading or of writing in the English language (Hall 1996: 152). Thus, David Cressy warns, when speaking of the American colonies, "it is important to talk of the margins of literacy, gradations of literacy, and of the uneven incidence of literacy in a partially literate society, rather than a simple dichotomy of literacy and illiteracy" (Cressy 1983: 27). Deborah Keller-Cohen prefers to speak of a "web of relationships among reading, writing, and speaking" (Keller-Cohen 1994: 158). Indeed, the recent publication of the first volume of *A History of the Book in America* entitled *The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World* points out the importance of the growing field of "book history" in the study of Early America. To imply that the term literacy reflects a consistent, unified set of practices, these studies suggest, does not accurately reflect even a relatively narrow historical or geographical situation.

But even more significantly for our purposes, there is the question of what, exactly, constitutes "reading," "writing," and even "text." In particular, when we shift our focus from Western cultures to indigenous literacy systems, there is much debate over what actually constitutes writing: are images on a monument/building writing systems? Are pictures? Clothing? Tattoo? Weaving? Is there a difference between what one writer calls "complex iconography" and a "writing system" (Boone and Mignolo 1994: 6)? G. Warkentin points out that most historians of writing separate sign systems into semasiographic (image-based) and phonographic (language-based) – a distinction that isn't always particularly relevant in Native "texts" such as wampum strings or belts, petroglyphs, painted skins, and birch-bark scrolls (Warkentin 1999: 3–4). In fact, indigenous American cultures often have systems of communication that are so dramatically different from Western models that they are easily misunderstood or overlooked by Western observers. Or the inverse can occur – what functions as a communicative system in an indigenous culture may look like something else for which colonial cultures have what is perceived as an equivalent (art, decorative patterning, jewelry) and therefore colonial reports overlook its alternative communicative uses.

Elizabeth Hill Boone offers a useful model for thinking about literacy systems in the New World. She points out that reading and/or writing is a matter of understanding the symbols and the grammar of a given system; literacy is not intuitive, and never automatic, but instead is learned and becomes comprehensible within a cultural context. She cites, for example, the Incan quipu, which is a communicative system from the Andes based on colored strings knotted and arranged in order. This system, which is poorly understood today, has a "grammar" that involves a three-dimensional "text" rather than an inscribed page and an interpretive structure based on knot type and placement, as well as the color, length, thickness, and spin of the string (Boone and Mignolo 1994: 20–1). Utterly distinct from our own books, with their flat pages and graphic marks, the quipu is nonetheless perfectly legible within its own context. Boone thus concludes that if a particular text functions within a society to

"*document* and to *establish* ideas" [italics in the original], is (relatively) permanent, can be read/interpreted by someone other than its creator, and most importantly, is generally recognized within a culture as a valid document, then it should be recognized as participating within a literacy system (Boone and Mignolo 1994: 21). And while we may not have access to the grammar of any given communication system, Boone emphasizes, recognizing the broadest application of our notions of "grammar" and "text" opens us as scholars to the complexity of all kinds of interpretive systems that shape and give meaning to culture.

And so, keeping in mind these various ways of thinking about literacy and its place in marking civilization, we return to the two colonial situations with which we began. In certain ways Spain and England came up against exactly inverted problems: in New Spain the culture of the Aztecs and their literacy practices were too similar to those of the Spanish, while in New England the cultures and literacy practices of the Algonquian residents were not similar enough. Both situations led to often devastating misunderstandings, appropriations, and destruction, even as they provided a backdrop for dynamic new literacy systems that we are only beginning to understand.

New Spain

Unlike the cultures of precolonial North America, Central American indigenous peoples had an extensive written tradition involving paper, ink, and even folded texts that on the surface seemed remarkably similar to Spanish manuscript books. Colonial intervention in these cultures, then, involved not so much the creation of written language, but a struggle for control of alternative textual literacies. In both Spanish and Nahua cultures literacy was not universal; it was the exception rather than the norm, and even as the printing press was becoming more widely used in Europe, writing was still a skill associated with the clergy or a small cadre of trained individuals. Among the Nahua, scribes were generally of noble birth and were educated and trained for this specific function; written records were carefully monitored and controlled, to be consulted only by authorized individuals – religious or political figures.

Despite these similarities, Aztec and Spanish "books" were not the same. In fact, as Walter Mignolo has argued, the analogy to Spanish books applied by colonists erased important differences and blinded people to the rich and complex meanings of Nahuatl literacy. Nahuatl texts, or amoxtli, are made of bark paper folded accordion-like and inscribed in red and black ink. The writing system of the Nahuas is image-driven; its "grammar" involves placement on a page, size, associations, etc. The content of Nahua books, according to one Spanish observer, could be divided into five genres: "the first . . . deals with years and calculations of time; the second, with the days and with the feasts which the Indians observed during the year; the third, with dreams, illusions, superstitions, and omens in which the Indians believed; the fourth, with baptisms and with names that were bestowed upon children; the fifth, with the

rites, ceremonies, and omens of the Indians relative to marriage" (qtd. in Mignolo 1995: 74–5). Significantly, reading was inseparable from oral performance. For the Aztecs, "reading" was a dual act between the page and the "singer/reader" who interpreted the page; one was irrelevant without the other. The value of the text, then, was not only in its use as record, but also in its ceremonial presence.

With the arrival of the Spaniards and the destruction of some of the most significant Nahuatl amoxtli, however, the dominant literacy system quickly (within one generation of contact) became alphabetic print. In post-contact books, called codices, the pictographic system is relegated to "accompanying illustrations," while the main "text" is in alphabetically reproduced Spanish, Nahuatl, or both. The original (and now mostly destroyed) amoxtli would have been painted/written on paper made of tree bark or deer hide and consulted by individuals whose education from early childhood would have prepared them to read, write, and perform Nahuatl texts. The codices we now have, including, for example, Spanish missionary Bernadino de Sahagún's 12-volume *Florentine Codex*, are transcriptions/summaries/interpretations of those original texts by Spanish missionaries and Native scribes/informants; they are written on European-style paper and bound, usually with indigenous pictures/pictographs and alphabetic accompanying text, usually in Nahuatl and/or Spanish (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 62–71). No longer written and maintained for the benefit of indigenous people, these texts were created for European readers to better understand the culture they were attempting to supplant. Such codices must be understood as bi-cultural documents as they are produced by Native writers with the approval/for the use of Spanish missionaries.

And yet, as modern scholars are quick to point out, a Nahuatl writing system, while seriously impacted by the Spanish conquest, remains in evidence throughout these codices. While it may be rendered more or less invisible to Europeans for whom it takes on the function of mere illustration, this does not change the fact of its continuing existence as a writing system. Thus a text like Sahagún's *Florentine Codex*, written in Spanish as well as in the newly created form of Nahuatl in alphabetic letters and finally that includes Nahuatl pictographs as well as European-style illustrations, points to the coexistence of multiple systems of literacy. Even a cursory examination of this extraordinary text makes apparent the fact that as modern readers so accustomed to our own form of literacy we are utterly unprepared to account for the multiplicity of expression each page represents.

Other than the codices (mentioned above), much of the other writing that we know of consists of colonial documents written by Natives who are actively participating in one way or another in Spanish systems of power or control. These are all either Spanish-language documents or indigenous-language documents written in alphabetic script. These texts seem in many ways far more straightforward; while perhaps the precise language in use is foreign to us, these documents are, after all, written in the alphabetic script we still use today. Yet each of these examples illustrates in one way or another the impact of combining and alternating coexisting literacy systems. As scholar Louis Burkhart has illustrated, Spanish-language devotional plays adapted

much of the pageantry originating in Nahuatl religious practice, while James Lockhart and others have pointed out that wills and testaments often used turns of phrase or ways of perceiving inheritance, land use, and familial relations that harked back to a much older system. Even Catholic devotional manuals were modeled on indigenous codices to make them more "user-friendly" to new converts. New systems of meaning thus emerged from the overlaps and gaps between older forms of literacy; as the horrifying brutality of the cultural encounter gave way to a new social order, ways of representing meaning were permanently altered for both the Nahuas and the Spanish colonizers.

New England

Just as the Nahua of New Spain had a complex set of cultural practices already in place before the arrival of the Spanish, so did the early Algonquian inhabitants of the eastern coast of North America. However, because these cultural practices did not involve anything as clearly associated with European literacy as the Nahua practices were, scholars have long believed colonial New England's earliest literature was limited to what Anglo-Americans reported. Such Anglo-American colonists include Thomas Morton (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 236–40), Roger Williams (ibid: 267–76), and Benjamin Church (ibid: 299–307). It should be noted, though, that these documents are not written with the intent of "neutrally" reporting Native cultural practices with what we might call "anthropological" or "ethnohistorical" accuracy. Instead, they are biased documents reporting fragmentary evidence in pursuit of a specific agenda. More recently (as this book attests) scholars have become more sophisticated about looking within those texts for previously unrecognized alternative discourses as well as looking beyond them to non-print sources. As cultural studies opens avenues between disciplines, anthropology, archeology, and history have entered our line of vision; material culture is "legible" in a way literary critics have not always allowed it to be. This has had important effects on the study of indigenous cultures; breaking down assumptions about textuality, literacy, and interpretation has dramatically altered for us the cultural landscape of early New England.

A commonplace of colonial Native American studies is that the indigenous cultures Anglo-Americans encountered were strictly oral in nature. Certainly, oral exchange was central to the Algonquians of the northeast. Stories, religious beliefs, and political exchanges were expressed orally and transmitted from one generation to another in a form that was highly ritualized, and clearly central to preserving the immediacy and intimacy of communal life. Although there is not an example from the New England area, indigenous oral narratives are represented in Castillo and Schweitzer (2001: 8–18). Like all written versions of oral narratives, these texts can only imperfectly capture the experience of these stories in their original form. In some ways an analogy to colonial treaty negotiations is useful here: when Native people in New England engaged in political exchange with Anglo-Americans, there was always

a face-to-face meeting in which groups of Native representatives met with their Anglo-American counterparts to discuss the issue at hand for several days. In this meeting there were extended speeches and formal exchanges accompanied by gifts of wampum. At the end of the whole exchange, a treaty was signed, and each party walked away with a copy of the treaty, wampum, and memories of the experience. For the Anglo-American participants, that experience had been a mere preamble to the production of the written text; for the Native participants, however, the experience itself and the exchange of wampum validated the agreement, not the written text. Like these political exchanges, the narratives in the anthology were meant to be expressed in a certain context; their meaning is contained in their relationship to community, and we cannot assume that reading them on a page carries the same weight as the words in their original context. As we move away from alphabetic literacy as "the" marker of culture, the interplay between oral culture and text becomes more complex than was ever imagined. Images on baskets, pictographs, the mats that lined the interiors of wigwams, and utensils all reinforce oral exchanges whose functions are extremely varied but always include a community element. Thus scholars such as Ann McMullen, Melissa Fawcett, and Gladys Tantaquidgeon have pointed out the ways Mohegan basket-weavers communicated among themselves about community identity and the political divisions within their tribe even well into the eighteenth century through painted basketry motifs representing tribal unity and dispersal (McMullen and Handsman 1987: 98–101, 115–16). Together, the oral and the material create sophisticated cultural communicative systems with all kinds of markers that were illegible to colonizers.

The attempted erasure of indigenous literacy systems is a horrifying legacy of conquest; the continued existence of such systems as well as their integration into European models of literacy is a testament to the cultural resilience of New England's Algonquian people. As it turns out, the Algonquians, just like the Nahuas, were remarkably adept at incorporating new forms of literacy and altering their own familiar ones to account for new materials and concepts. Thus wampum, long a marker of personal or cultural prestige, with the arrival of the English also became a system of economic exchange. And clothing, a longstanding means of personal expression, integrated English materials – sometimes in startling ways. Mary Rowlandson describes one Algonquian couple's ceremonial outfit as follows:

> He was dressed in his Holland shirt, with great Laces sewed at the tail of it, he had his silver Buttons, his white stockins, his Garters were hung round with Shillings, and he had Girdles of Wampom upon his head and shoulders. She had a Kersey Coat, and covered with Girdles of Wampom from the Loins upward: her armes from her elbows to her hands were covered with Bracelets; there were handfuls of Neck-laces about her neck, and severall sorts of Jewels in her ears. She had fine red Stockins, and white Shoos, her hair powdered and face painted Red, that was always before Black. (Rowlandson 1997: 103)

Just as wampum had become something other than it had been in Algonquian cultures of the northeast, so did coins, laces, and other English materials become very different in the context of Algonquian ceremonial regalia. And certainly in the context of King Philip's War, seen by many as the final military attempt by the Algonquians of New England to protect indigenous land and culture, the use of English trade items on clothing was no mere accident. Indeed, these two outfits, so carefully constructed and meticulously laid out, represent precisely the issues of literacy and interpretation at the heart of this essay; whatever social and cultural meanings any given item or text contains in one culture, it becomes something quite different when taken outside its own system of meaning. And while those meanings may no longer be available to us, to suggest that only one group has the power to "read" and "write" culture is quite clearly a misguided one.

But while we may recognize various structures of literacy embedded within Algonquian culture, English Protestant missionaries were less interested in such alternative forms. It is unquestionably the missionaries, both in New Spain and in New England, who mandated the structures of culturally sanctioned literacy. For both Catholic Spain and Protestant England, religion was linked to literacy, although Protestantism advocated a far broader spread of literacy than Catholicism. David Hall and others have emphasized the link between alphabetic literacy and Christianity in Protestant New England, where primers served as catechisms and even the Bible served as an introductory reader. New England's colonists emphasized literacy as the first step to religious conversion; the very basis of the New England Protestant missionary effort to impart alphabetic literacy presumed not only the theological superiority of the Christian faith, but also the cultural superiority of the English as a rational, literate people.

Without a phonetic written system, missionaries rejected Native languages as inadequate for a true understanding of Christianity, leaving them with two options: first teach Natives the English language and then the concept of language in a written form, or create a written form of an Algonquian language. Either was an almost inconceivably laborious process, but in the end John Eliot, the earliest and most influential missionary in New England, chose the latter, and spent most of his career supervising the translation of texts into Massachusett, a language he co-created in its written form with the Natives he referred to as his "assistants": John Sassomon, Job Nesuton, and James Printer. In 1663 Eliot and his "assistants" produced the Indian Bible, a translation of both the Old and New Testaments into Massachusett. Like missionary Bernadino de Sahagún in New Spain, John Eliot in New England was central to the formation of not only a cadre of Native converts conversant in multiple languages (and presumably, cultures), but also to the production of a set of texts sanctioned by the dominant colonial power through which these Natives were to receive an authorized version of religious and cultural practice. These two missionaries were both deeply committed to the spread of Christianity and by extension European civil structures, and each embedded the words of Natives in their texts as a way to encourage conversions. While both missionaries seem to have been committed on

some level to giving voice to Native perspectives, John Eliot was primarily interested in what Natives had to say about Christianity, and not much else. For John Eliot and other New England missionaries, appropriate conversion involved replacing Native religious and cultural practices that missionaries either misunderstood or devalued with English Protestant religious tracts, town structures, and ideologies. Native traditions were sometimes treated with contempt, but largely ignored in the bulk of missionary writing from colonial New England. On the other hand, Sahagún's labor in New Spain is a complex and extremely ambivalent combination of two impulses: the missionary drive to root out idolatry similar to that of New England's missionaries, but also the desire to document indigenous cultural practices. The result is a set of colonial documents sanctioned by the conquering culture as they shape and control detailed representations of preconquest Nativeness; they quite simply have no counterpart in New England missionary documents.

Whatever the intentions of the missionaries were, along with the particular set of texts that Eliot and others produced, what emerged from the attempt to codify the Massachusett language was a mechanism through which Natives could produce texts in their own language that were legible to only a handful of Euro-Americans. Indeed, as Ives Goddard and Kathleen Bragdon, modern scholars of the Massachusett language, point out, "from the time of their first introduction in the mid-seventeenth century . . . the functions of reading and writing were modified to fit native needs, and defined according to traditional concepts" (Goddard and Bragdon 1988: 20). By the early eighteenth-century, scholars estimate that vernacular literacy in Native communities hovered around 30 percent – an altogether extraordinary figure (ibid: 14). Indeed, some have argued, rather than accelerating the demise of indigenous traditions, the production of a written language allowed Natives to maintain their own community identity while adapting themselves to Anglo-American demands – a consequence so unsettling to Anglo-American missionaries that the practice of translating and printing Massachusett-language texts came to an almost complete standstill by the early eighteenth century. Nonetheless, handwritten documents in Massachusett continued to be exchanged for much of the rest of the century, until English became the dominant language even among New England Natives by the early nineteenth century.

A variety of Native-authored texts were produced throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the alphabetically rendered Massachusett language. Unsurprisingly, given the close connection between Christianity and literacy training, many of these documents are religious in nature. From marginalia in the Massachusett-language Bible, to church records, to Native confessions, Christianity suffuses much of this written language. Seventeenth-century missionary John Eliot translated some of the earliest Native conversion narratives, and eighteenth-century missionary Experience Mayhew of Martha's Vineyard compiled a series of short biographies of Native converts, using some of their own writing, in a book called *Indian Converts* (1727). While these are in many ways quite typical of the form and structure of English conversion narratives, they depart from their English models in ways that

subtly remind us of the power of Native community practice. Since the concept of a conversion narrative, or a religious confession, doesn't seem to have had any counterpart in traditional Algonquian life, those texts that have survived reveal much about the struggles of Natives to engage with alien religious and cultural practices.

Some of the most intriguing documents from the period are those that merge various systems of literacy. Goddard and Bragdon point out that "like their English neighbors, Massachusett speakers produced legal documents such as wills and powers of attorney. Some submitted bills. They wrote letters and kept day-books and ledgers. Several Indian communities also corresponded with the colonial government and with the New England Company [the predominant missionary society in New England] through petitions" (Goddard and Bragdon 1988: 15). But unlike their English neighbors, Massachusett-speakers imbued many of their documents with distinctly oral elements. Such documents include land transfers and wills (an example is "Mittark's Agreement of Gay Head Indians Not to Sell Land to the English" in Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 351), which contain elements of both formal English legal systems and traditional indigenous community life. While such legal documents met all the criteria for validity under English law, they also contained elements of traditional Native practices (Goddard and Bragdon 1988: 14–16), making them in many ways multicultural documents legible within several cultural systems.

There are also documents written in English by Natives such as petitions and other legal documents that seem typical in most ways except that in place of a signature, or in the case of a non-literate person, an "x," these documents are validated by a pictograph. An example is the "Narragansett Act of Submission" from 1644 (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 350–1). One scholar has suggested that such pictographs mark not only individual identity, but also possibly clan affiliation, an association with a spirit world, or even some kind of totem (Heidi Bohaker, unpublished manuscript). Far more easily legible within a traditional indigenous culture, such pictographs signal the presence of multiple systems of meaning converging on paper. While the English words are what make it a legally valid document in English, the pictographs make it relevant to indigenous people in ways that are not entirely clear to outsiders. While colonists assumed a clear correlation between an individual's pictograph and a signature, this may have been an unfortunate analogy between quite different structures of meaning.

Once we move into the eighteenth century, English literacy by Native Americans goes up significantly. This results partly from a general increase in literacy in colonial New England and also from increased interest in Native education. Natives were sometimes taught reading and writing skills as a condition of their indenture when they entered English households, and several Native communities petitioned the Massachusetts colony for their own community schools. Finally, institutions funded through charitable donations like Eleazar Wheelock's Moor's Charity School were established to bring religion to the "poor heathens" – both through the education of

Native pupils, and through the training of white charity scholars to establish missions in faraway Native communities. The letters of Wheelock's students have been carefully preserved by Dartmouth College and are available on microfilm; some of these letters are written by young women who were also included for a certain period in the school. Most of the writing produced in this period is in the form of letters, sermons, autobiographies or confessions, and legal documents. Much is still undiscovered. While there is clear evidence of letter-writing networks among dispersed family members and friends, few Natives actively participated in the public discourse of colonial America.

Even so, in this period we have several important New England Native writers: Hendrick Aupaumut (Stockbridge/Mahican), diplomat and community leader; Samson Occom (Mohegan; see Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 478–83), an ordained minister and community leader; and Joseph Johnson (Mohegan), teacher, missionary, and political leader, to name a few. Aupaumut was educated in Stockbridge, Massachusetts and came to prominence as his tribe faced displacement and a severe population decline. Committed to maintaining his community in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds, Aupaumut sought to raise the profile of his people by serving as an early ambassador for the American government to Native tribes living further west. In this official capacity he was at times forced to make uncomfortable compromises with the newly established American government that put him at odds with other Native groups. He voiced his concerns in a series of political documents and travel journals that are remarkable for their extraordinary prose as well as the events they describe. Occom and Johnson were both students of Eleazar Wheelock as well as ordained ministers of evangelical Christianity. Each struggled to come to terms with their commitment to their Native community and their certainty that English cultural practices had much to offer. They both eventually decided that they would be better off without the direct intervention of whites, and together they founded Brotherton, a community of Native Christians from throughout New England on the edge of the Oneida Indian reservation in upstate New York. All of these men used their familiarity with English cultural practices (most notably alphabetic literacy) to forge what they saw as a stronger, "better" Native community that could balance among various knowledge systems. Aupaumut, for example, wrote a brief history of the ongoing traditions of the Mahican, or Stockbridge, people. Joseph Johnson negotiated for the land on which Brotherton, an Algonquian community, existed by adeptly using the language and structure of Iroquoian diplomatic protocol. And while himself a Mohegan, Occom was deeply familiar with the traditional culture of the Montaukett Indians among whom he lived for about a decade. In fact, his wife was of this tribe and maintained much of her traditional life throughout their marriage. And, even as Occom was writing and preaching in English, he also carved an extraordinary box (now housed in the Mohegan Church in Uncasville) rich with traditional markers for life, journey, and the continuity of Mohegan tribal identity.

Conclusions

As modern readers we expect colonial Native literatures to be represented in our anthologies by a few well chosen texts in English. If those texts were not originally produced in English or written on a page, we prefer that the act of translation be rendered invisible, for to name it is to force ourselves to acknowledge the violence implicit in the representation of colonial Native identity through paper, ink, and the English language. And such has been the hegemony of our literacy system that until Native lives are rendered in English alphabetic print, they have no voice in the historical record. The effort of representation, in other words, has historically been almost entirely theirs; they must adapt themselves to a system which was never intended to accommodate the differences between their worldview and a Western one. Eleazar Wheelock, the eighteenth-century Anglo-American missionary and educator, starkly formulates this issue. Addressing the problem of translation between Native languages and cultures and Anglo-American ones, he writes: "How shall this Difficulty be remedied? It seems it must be by one of these two Ways, viz. either their Children must come to us, or ours go to them. But who will venture their Children with them . . . ? (Wheelock 1763: 24). The answer for him was self-evident: clearly, white people could not be expected to risk themselves or their children among Natives, and so it seemed only reasonable to him that he should found a boarding school for Native children, who were to be cheerfully dropped off by their parents and returned once they were fully acculturated to English ways. So certain was he of the superiority of his own culture that he was bewildered by the parents' reluctance to let their children go and those children's determination to return to their homes.

Perhaps for us, however, the answer is less self-evident. As we approach the past with more open minds, we can try to educate ourselves beyond our initial assumptions and take on some of the complex work of translation and interpretation. We might then marvel at the ways in which literacy and culture have been intertwined, both in the complex patterning of a woodsplint basket and in the particular phrasing of an Algonquian will. Looking beyond the geographic bounds of this essay, we might also be able to celebrate the cultural temerity of the Cherokee syllabary, or the extraordinary complexity of Navajo sand-painting sacred rituals in which knowledge is passed down orally, briefly created as a "text" and then destroyed in its material form. When a mark on a surface is not necessarily a symbol for a particular word, but rather a representation of a moment, a thought, or a belief that can be expressed verbally in a number of ways, literacy explodes in meaning, and we must acknowledge not only the richness of communicative systems in various cultures, but also face our own "illiteracy" in reading or understanding these systems.

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24
America's First Mass Media: Preaching and the Protestant Sermon Tradition

Gregory S. Jackson

A Sermon Overview

Although we think of sermons as primarily an oral genre, until at least the mid-eighteenth century in Britain and the early nineteenth in America, the Protestant sermon comprised a large portion of all printed materials. Because of the sermon's enduring prominence and because for much of American history religion has exercised authority in arenas both public and private, political and social, the category of the sermon merits a broad definition. While the Sabbath Day sermon has changed little from its sixteenth-century purpose of converting and admonishing sinners, exhorting righteous behavior, and inspiring piety, the style of its composition and delivery have altered dramatically, sometimes through innovation, at other times through reversion to more conventional forms.

Historically, the American sermon has been one of the most vital forms of mass media. Few aspects of society have remained outside its purview and regulation. Slavery, divorce, women's rights, science, education, immigration, industrialization, and political issues of every stripe – indeed, almost every dimension of secular culture – have been influenced by religious values. John Winthrop's "A Modell of Christian Charity," for example, outlines the spiritual and economic goals of the New World plantation. It is as much a political credo as it is a sermon, presenting a theory of social contract in an age shifting from ancient, feudal forms of governance based on allegiance to models in which subjects consent to bind themselves to the polity through covenant. This fusion of the political and theological registers the problem with using modern literary conventions to categorize a form as unwieldy as the sermon. Winthrop's analogy of the Bay Colony as a "City on a Hill" – even then a threadbare metaphor – announces in advance that, like John Calvin's adopted Zurich,

the new colony would be a theocracy, a community whose governance was inseparable from the church, and whose civic order and justice would be regulated by biblical law and ecclesiastical custom. And it puts any student of New England history on notice that religion and politics kept close company in theory and practice.

Because the sermon has since the Reformation been a register of pedagogy and epistemology – concerned with how best to educate the young about sin and concerned with how individuals know or experience both the temporal and spiritual worlds – its form has evolved to reflect shifting perceptions about metaphysical truths and philosophical understandings. For more than two centuries following John Locke's watershed theory of sensual psychology, for example, which held knowledge to be the product of information gleaned through the senses and through subsequent reflection, the sermon mirrored a prevailing view that equated sensual stimulus with enhanced information reception and knowledge retention. Dressing their sermons in what we now think of as the gothic idiom, evangelical preachers set about frightening their backsliding congregations into moral reform. Believing that fear heightened parishioners' aural receptivity to intangible metaphysical truths by linking the apprehension of the supernatural world to perceptible (sensual) physiological manifestations – increased respiration, chills, gooseflesh, uncontrollable shaking, groaning and wailing, and even fainting – ministers and exhorters strove to bring their congregants to the concrete realization of good and evil. As Perry Miller writes of Jonathan Edwards' theological realism, "if a sermon was to work an effect, it had to impart the sensible idea in all immediacy; in the new [Lockean] psychology, it must become, not a traveler's report nor an astrologer's prediction, but an actual descent into hell" (Miller 1959: 156).

Other social conditions shaped the evolution of the sermon. In the late eighteenth century, shifting perceptions of a child's educational aptitude gave rise to many sermon variations. Changing views about human psychology, hermeneutic traditions, and reading epistemologies helped recover discarded narrative forms, such as parables, homilies, spiritual confessions, or the fusion of liturgy and drama. Students of Anglo-American religious culture not only have to contend with the scope of Protestant doctrine encapsulated in the sermon, but also with a structural evolution largely shaped by shifts in perceptions of how individuals and congregations experience spiritual reality.

While sermons in the Calvinist denominations are often broken down into two principle categories, the occasional sermon and the Sabbath sermon, such rubrics necessarily simplify the rich complexity of traditions that generated a wealth of variations, including the formal sermon, the Jeremiad, the revival sermon, the homiletic sermon, the "sermon story" (what I call "homiletic novel"), and the like (Jackson 2003). Special events such as fast days, Election Day, funerals and weddings, thanksgivings, harvest weeks, and the opening of the General Court were marked by occasional sermons that reminded congregants of their responsibility as custodians of New England's godly culture and the legacy of their pious ancestors. On Election Day,

for example, ministers reminded their voters of their religious duty to participate in the vitality of civic life and the health of the community. The occasional sermon helped shape the education of the colony, reiterating anew the meaning of public events and broader moral issues, while assailing vice. While the recurring themes found in the Sabbath Day sermon (often extant as an outline or notes) provide a useful assessment of localized moral referendums, community failures and successes, and topical concerns, the broader, more regional concerns expounded in the occasional sermon registered shared colonial values and fostered pan-colonial social order and religious sobriety. Because understanding the sermon tradition depends on a broader knowledge of the cultural contexts in which that tradition took shape, the discussion that follows will entail the religious and cultural practices from which new sermon styles emerged, and the historical trajectory and theological shifts that made the Protestant forensic tradition a dynamic part of Anglo-American religious culture.

The Sermon in the Age of Reformation

The "Age of Reformation" is a misleading, though conventional, historical marker. Insofar as it implies a brief and clearly delineated period, it obscures both the extent to which Reformation ideas had been circulating through much of northern Europe for at least a century beforehand, and the fact that reform continued long after Henry VIII's decisive break with papal authority in England. Henry, in fact, did little to change either the church or its Roman Catholic liturgy. A distinctive Anglican liturgy was decades in forming, shaped and reshaped by internal struggles from the Elizabethan "settlement" onwards, through Laudian reforms, Puritan revolt, and the Restoration of the British throne in 1660. As Protestantism diversified, diverging interpretive practices, sacramental rites, and devotional rituals rose and declined in both England and the American colonies, leading to bitter sectarian rivalries and religious persecution. The Church of England's demand for religious conformity precipitated a mass exodus of purists and separatists from England between 1610 and 1642. Intensifying internal struggles culminated in the collapse of the monarchy and the regicide of Charles I in 1649. At the high point of religious schism and the formation of new sects, the *Interregnum* (1649–60) unloosed the pent-up energies of Reformation heterodoxy, as large and small sects alike – from the Fifth Monarchy Men and Ranters to utopian communities modeled after Little Gidding – struggled to locate and define new sources of spiritual authority. Only with the restoration of the crown in 1660 and the Parliamentary edict mandating religious tolerance on both sides of the Atlantic, did Protestantism begin to stabilize in England and the colonies. Ecclesiastical stability would continue with minor interruptions until late in the eighteenth century, when the great social and political upheavals on the Continent and in the American colonies precipitated a popular religious revolution equal to anything the schismatic seventeenth century had produced.

Having arrived in the New World from England (initially via Holland) in waves of immigration referred to as "The Great Migration," the Anglo-American Puritans formed colonies or "plantations" less as separatists than as religious "purifiers." While loyal to the crown, they rejected the state-sanctioned church for having inhabited, rather than dismantled, the church structures and clerical hierarchies vacated by the Roman Catholic expulsion. But the break with Rome and the Protestant struggle to reform the church destabilized both the political and social structures. Literacy and educational advocacy were Faustian bargains that initiated profound social change, including the shift from absolute to constitutional monarchy, in the first two centuries following the Reformation. Likewise, Protestantism's emphasis on individual volition and "liberty of conscience" severed conventional ties of political obligation and community, and destabilized the hierarchies that had long organized society. In the void created by the broad rejection of clerical mediation (including Catholic sacraments and confession), the sermon emerged as a form of media to help delineate and regulate new religious and social order. On the tide of so much change, the Protestant sermon developed in the manner it did and ultimately engaged such a broad demographic range because it answered deeper questions about epistemology and human agency during an epoch of religious and political upheaval, including the decentering of philosophic beliefs and social structures that had guided religious thought and experience for centuries.

During the Protestant Reformation in England, Scotland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Prussia, and among the Huguenots in France, the sermon became the principal form of religious pedagogy. In an age when few people could read or write, when less than 10 percent of the population had access to the Bible, and both church and state severely regulated vernacular translations of scripture, the sermon was the principle engine driving Protestantism. Protestants, particularly in the Reformed Church, responded to two critical tenets of Reformation theology. First, they emphasized the individual's personal relationship with God, their semi-autonomous quest for insight into their place in the providential design. Second, they emphasized the centrality of the Bible in that quest. Together, these two precepts resulted in an emphasis on literacy, especially interpretive and biblical literacy that would require new educational forms. Protestant sermons needed not just to convert the lost and to inform the audience about their faith; they needed to teach their auditors *how to think* their faith, how to read and apply the scriptures to their own lives. This was particularly true in the Calvinist tradition, with its greater emphasis on scriptural literalism alone as the guide to salvation. As we will see, Puritan ministers developed highly complex systems to help their readers meet the intellectual challenges of responding to the gospel message.

At the same time, it is important to remember that although Puritan sermon forms schooled their audiences in a measure of religious autonomy, they could also ameliorate some of the religious atomism fostered by the Reformation, which increasingly encouraged individuals to discover for themselves the self-evident gospel message without recourse to creeds, theology, or clergy. In this transition toward private

judgment the sermon functioned as the social and spiritual glue that united the private, inner lives of individuals with the larger collective.

This way of understanding the scripture – of reading and interpreting, and applying its lessons to everyday life – provided the foundation of Calvinism, differentiating it from the other branch of Protestantism, Anglicans (a mix of Calvinist tradition and Catholic lineage), Lutherans, and later Episcopalians. While "Reformed" Calvinists – principally Baptists, Anabaptists, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Quakers, and later Methodists – diverged in such theological points and sacramental practices as when and how to baptize, communion, conversion morphology, and church membership, they were unified in a system of beliefs that distinguished them to a greater extent from Lutherans and Anglicans. The primary difference was Calvinists' deeper commitment to *Sola Scriptura*, the principle that the scriptures were not only the sole authority on religious beliefs and practices, but that they also provided a blueprint for daily life. The second significant difference was the "Regulative Principle," the core belief that the faithful were meant both to follow explicit scriptural commandments and to refrain from doing anything implicitly forbidden in the Bible, as determined through moral extrapolation. Lutherans and Anglicans, on the other hand, held on to many older, Roman Catholic liturgical forms. Ritual customs, received wisdom, such scriptural supplements as the Book of Common Prayer and the Patristic commentaries, while not the Bible's authoritative equal, supplemented their theology and religious practice, even as their expanded base of spiritual authority diminished the need for the sermon, ensuring its relative stability. By contrast, Calvinists' commitment to biblical literalism and rejection of extra-scriptural sources helped vitalize the sermon, and made preaching the focal point of public worship.

The Anglo-American Puritans were inordinately fond of formalism. They divided all knowledge (in heaven and on earth) into seven categories, the seven sister arts, which together comprised the encyclopedia – or "circle of knowledge." Long captivated by the intellectualism of Puritan culture, scholars have mined seventeenth-century Puritanism for its rich understanding of classical traditions and medieval scholasticism. Many of the New England Puritan ministers and magistrates, like Thomas Hooker, Thomas Shepard, Roger Williams, Henry Vane, John Wheelwright, and John Cotton, immigrated to the new world with advanced university degrees, most matriculating from Cambridge, the nursery of sixteenth-and seventeenth-century Puritanism. Puritan leaders in the second and third generations – among them Increase and his son Cotton Mather, Solomon Stoddard, Edward Taylor, John Wise, and Samuel Sewell – graduated from Harvard College, founded less than a decade after the Puritans recorded the royal patent for the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Literacy for all was a stalwart feature of Puritan culture, and led the first important scholar of Puritanism to characterize New England's founding history as "the life of the mind."

The intellectual and metaphysical traditions of Anglo-American Puritanism attached knowledge to form, creating a complex scaffolding from which Puritan ministers attempted to reach beyond the ken of the senses and probe the invisible

mystery of the divine. In this way, the sermon's use of logic, the division and categorization of all knowledge into interlocking parts, and even the complex heuristic systems that required specialized reading (or hermeneutic) practices were predicated on the unquestioned assumption that specific forms like the sermon or allegory constituted specialized spiritual knowledge, such that, when properly interpreted, these forms rendered a particular spiritual meaning. The clearest examples of the relation between form and knowledge, and how the reader approaches the former to achieve the latter, are the sophisticated mnemonic systems in which spatial paradigms – emblems, Ramistic logic trees, heuristic schema, catechistic blueprints, and the like – were freighted with information that could later be retrieved through a particular process of reading.

Thus the sixteenth and seventeenth-century sermon design, which utilized a classical rhetorical anatomy adapted from scholasticism, depended on an affinity between form and the experience it measured out. By dividing the sermon into five component parts – "Invention" (*inventio*), "Arrangement" (*dispositio*), "Style" (*elocutio*), "Delivery" (*pronuntiatio*), and "Memory" (*memoria*) – Protestant ministers employed a linguistic algorithm that helped match biblical wisdom with daily trials, and then framed that lesson in a style calculated not merely to tickle listeners' ears but to penetrate their hearts. In the idiom of Renaissance faculty psychology, the sermon message was to lodge itself at the core of the conscience: after having been rendered more compelling by the affect it produced in the Passions and the Imagination, and tested and tempered by the rational faculty of the Reason, it was to reveal itself in naked simplicity to the Understanding, the seat of knowledge. Having passed through the initial faculties in appropriate sequence, the Will, or faculty of volition, could then use this new knowledge to motivate and direct the Christian's moral conduct according to the dictates of spiritual enlightenment. The sermon's form was thus roughly commensurate with the kind of knowledge it was meant to organize and disseminate and with the perceived steps through which human faculties gleaned and processed information. It sought to structure thought in accordance with theology (Invention and Arrangement) and to unify congregants' minds toward a larger communal pattern (Style). Intoned in such a way as to heighten the soul's reception (Delivery), the sermon design as a whole preserved its content in a paradigm structurally organized for auditors' retention and later reflection (Memory). Its technology was algorithmic in the sense that it provided a prescribed number of steps through which the minister processed the moral argument. By feeding information into a complicated rhetorical equation adapted from classical models, then, Puritan divines synthesized and categorized biblical exegesis, spiritual instruction, and the moral challenges of daily life into digestible units of knowledge.

In the Puritan sermon the display of methodology was at least as important as the content and message, adhering closely to the scriptural precept and Protestant mantra to "prove all things, hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5: 21). Sermon design also operated as a forensic technology that verified its own theological accuracy. Implicit in this early pedagogy was the skeletal structure of nineteenth-century

Practical Christianity's fully fleshed homiletic theory of active and engaged learning, epitomized by the kindergarten movement. By directing auditors through the same finite number of steps, the sermon reiterated its compositional development and knowledge acquisition, reducing the passivity of the listener's role (*the* greatest objection to Locke's mechanistic epistemology). In this model, the sermon was not a decree handed down from on high. Rather, it provided a built-in fact-checking system by which the Christian auditor was meant quite literally to "audit" the sermon, an act that recovers the term's double meaning: "to hear" and "to take an accounting" of something's accuracy (OED) – "to prove all things." Each step, from invention to delivery, laid out the argument in progressive stages of development that congregants were obligated to examine, try, and test. In this way, the steps of the equation initiated a supervised process of active engagement with spiritual truth, a process that not only accrued knowledge but also applied learning. Each of the sermon's forensic divisions functioned as a fact-checking category, which, by engaging the rapt auditor in a step-by-step arithmetic equation whose sum was greater than its parts, allowed him or her to transcend the materiality of facts and figures and achieve a higher, spiritual knowledge. Predicated on the faith that knowledge is embedded in form, and only through a reiteration of form itself can one access, interpret, and apply that knowledge to daily life, the Puritan commitment to systems and form bequeathed this "auditing" function to the nineteenth-century sermon.

If the centrality of biblical interpretation in Protestant culture inspired the pedagogical structure of Puritan sermons, it also provided a way of understanding the place of Puritan culture within the cyclical themes of sacred history. Early sermons drew on a wealth of biblical histories, figures, tropes, homilies, allegories, and parables to illuminate the sacred patterns and meaning in both individual lives and Puritan history as a whole. They did so by extending the hermeneutic process through typology – which saw events in the Old Testament as prefiguring events in the New – to all subsequent history. For example, the blessing-covenant-moral decline-despair-penitence cycle was a perceived pattern of the lives of biblical personages (such as Adam, Moses, Saul, David, and Samson) and chosen groups (Noah's descendants, the Israelites delivered from Egypt, and their descendants in Canaan). Like the Israelites, Anglo-Americans represented themselves as fleeing captivity – not physical captivity in this case, but the enslavement of the Will under religious tyranny. Depicted both as the Red Sea crossing and the desert of forty years' wandering, the Atlantic crossing represented a great test of faith and perseverance for the Puritans, as it would for religious African Americans in the nineteenth century. Hundreds of crossing accounts and maritime sermons attest to the soul-wrenching travails endured by those traveling to the American shores, the New Canaan, the Promised Land that awaited God's chosen. The cyclic recurrence of such sacred historical patterns confirmed for the Puritans their providential right to the New World, whose native population for some immigrants also fit a typological pattern, as the inhabitants of Canaan, whom God enjoined the Israelites to destroy. Typology provided a fund of tropes that helped the spiritual prescript and direct their own lives in ways both individual and communal. Hagiographies like Cotton Mather's *Magnalia*

Christi Americana elevated particular leaders as exemplary. John Winthrop, William Bradford, Thomas Hooker, John Cotton, and Thomas Shepard, among others, each played the part of Moses or Joshua in the Puritan chronicles, in sermons, and in community encomiums. Others like Miles Standish, Hannah Dustan, and Mary Rowlandson were cast as Old Testament Samsons, Esthers, or Deborahs, administering God's judgment on infidels and heretics.

As the young developed their roles within the sermon's allegorical frame, they learned to see their agency and action as playing a vital part in the Manichean drama of good and evil. In nothing did the sermon demonstrate Puritan reading practices so well as in its interpretation of the temporal world as a sign system of divine meaning relevant to the individual's spiritual needs. The reader's act of transforming personal experience into a moral lesson – as a mark of God's favor or the sting of his chastening rod – does not so much eradicate the particular as an index of historical specificity, as it reorients it. Through the patterns of biblical typology, historical particularity becomes a symbolic structure through which universal and eternal truths emerge. Rendering their lives as a spiritual allegory, readers bridged human will and divine grace, bringing the transcendent into history and historicizing the universal.

While sermons shaped larger doctrinal orientations such as the Congregational synods of seventeenth-century New England, they also made room for the particularization of community, carving out what we might think of as a localized hermeneutic space. Even as sermons helped to orient reformed communities in a cardinal direction, broadly guiding Protestants toward a common horizon, they also helped to diversify and shape doctrinal interpretations within smaller communities and congregations. Sermons in seventeenth-century New England may not have been theologically innovative, but they often refined the features of existing faith enough to subtly alter belief, doctrine, and practice, occasionally breeding heresy. Religious doctrine was not elastic; intolerance for divergent beliefs on the micro level tended to breed deep animosity. As Protestant sectarianism began to flourish, many, like the Congregationalists, Quakers, and Baptists, rejected any official executive branch – whether episcopacy, presbytery, or "head." In New England, where Congregationalism lacked the Presbytery of Scottish Calvinism or the Bishopric in the Anglican Church, renegade doctrine was curtailed by synods and heresy trials, corrected in print, and unified by pulpit exchanges and occasional sermons – sometimes jointly written, circulated as templates, or delivered before interregional audiences. Yet, without a central government, these particularly American sects began to splinter and grow at ever increasing rates.

The Great Revivals and the Rise of Evangelicalism

In his famous 1756 pamphlet *A Philosophical Inquiry*, the young Irish Protestant philosopher Edmund Burke repeatedly turned to the figure of the "wild preacher" as an example of the power of rhetoric to manipulate human emotions. As the

theological debates of the First Great Awakening rose to a fever pitch, Britain was inundated by ministerial pronouncements and arguments for and against piety, for and against enthusiasm. Many of the books, pamphlets, and letters circulating from 1736 to the mid 1750s, though published in England, were written by the Anglo-American religious luminaries, including Edwards, Chauncy, Whitefield, Wesley, Watts, and Benjamin Cole. Since the debates often focused on charges against and denials of the "contagion" of rhetoric and the social dangers of exhorters and preachers to foment unrest with their fiery orations, it is little wonder that Burke turned to contemporary sermons – filled with metaphors, colloquial phrases, and word images calculated to excite the uneducated – as a particularly salient example of the impact unrefined language had upon the lower classes.

The eighteenth century saw an enormous shift in the Protestant sermon from form to forensics, the science of oratory. The religious events in New England comprising what, in retrospect, has been called the First Great Awakening (ca. 1735–42), were actually a series of proliferating regional religious revivals that coincided with and influenced intense outbreaks of religious fervor in England and Scotland. These revivals began a lasting change in the Calvinist sermon tradition. Whereas conventional sermon anatomy distributed emphasis more or less equally across five constitutive categories, the new sermons foregrounded "Style," "Delivery," and "Memory" at the expense of "Invention" and "Arrangement." Broadly speaking, this shift reflects wider cultural changes, including a popular validation of the emotions and passions as legitimate sources of perception; the further democratization of religion, exemplified by the emergence of the lay preacher; an increasing tolerance for private judgment and personal expression that, in its extreme, offered revelation and prophecy as legitimate sources of spiritual authority; and the radical individualism fostered by evangelical conversion experience. As Cartesian and Lockean psychological models and early modern medical discourse began displacing the tripartite anatomy of the Aristotelian soul, the rhetoric of emotion and sensation assumed new and, for both old guard Calvinists and Enlightenment rationalists, alarming prominence in public worship. Renowned ministers like Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, the Scottish Presbyterian James Robe, and the widely acclaimed George Whitefield, unloosed a pent-up emotionalism that was often seen as threatening the structures of Anglo-American society – especially in the American colonies where the worldliness of the Restoration, the age of satire, and the emerging radical ("unbelieving") Enlightenment were little known. While passionate preachers and "fire and brimstone sermons" were not new in Anglo-American culture, the level and scale of excitement they produced were. And the outcome of revival enthusiasm shook American Protestantism to the core. Looking back from the other side of the American Revolution to describe this great religious watershed, Ezra Stiles, eminent minister and president of Yale University, wrote: "multitudes were seriously, soberly, and solemnly out of their wits" (Morgan 1962: 143).

While seventeenth and early eighteenth-century ministers had balanced sermon form and function to organize and regulate the diversity of individual experience, they also relied on the broad generic sermon categories – Sabbath, fast day, election day,

and other occasional sermons, like the Jeremiad – to build community ties, to reclaim the perceived piety of preceding generations, to renew the ancestral covenant with God, and to strengthen ideological alliances among independent congregations. These sermon categories worked together to address both inter-and intramural concerns. Thus, the tradition performed a collective bargaining function, allowing community members to articulate the limits of moral and social concession, to address through dialogue and through public praise and proscription, what was acceptable, negotiable, or intolerable in order to frame the broadest features of colonial and community values.

But as extempore sermons became more common as a feature of revival enthusiasm, the interplay between different sermon categories ceased to have this regulating effect. Individual sermons were events in themselves, rather than parts of a larger structure. Near the beginning of his career, John Wesley had been lampooned for extemporaneous preaching. Now such preaching became commonplace, though it continued to be attacked as both cause and consequence of revival enthusiasm. Composed in relation to the needs, mood, and demography of increasingly diverse revival crowds, the sermon shed its rigid heuristic frame to embrace the structures of emerging literary forms. Aphoristic and associational, and employing repetition and sustained narrative, the sermon became an oral form of mass media that in print evinced the elastic, relaxed structure of the essay and the realist representation of the eighteenth-century novel.

In opposition to seventeenth-century sermon genres, the revival sermon was aimed at the individual rather than the communal in accordance with a radical theological shift that viewed regeneration as a condition triggered by a sudden change of heart. From the older model of gradual transformation shaped by the daily exercises conducted through the larger devotional community, revivalists increasingly turned to a mechanistic model of conversion that stressed the moment of awakening, initiated by a sudden awareness of their sin. The revival sermon was meant to prepare would-be converts for the Spirit's visitation. It was calculated to pierce the hearts of the most recalcitrant sinners. Jonathan Edwards' Enfield sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," while an anomaly in his canon, exemplified a growing trend that enlisted new, imaginative modes of discursive realism to work on auditors' emotions. Fervent preachers like Wesley, Whitefield, and Francis Asbury had to contend with charges of lunacy, at times sharing social status with itinerant performers. Charles Chauncy epitomized the criticism in his famous rebuff of Whitefield's extempore preaching: he "delivers himself, with the *greatest Vehemence* both of *Voice* and *Gesture*, and in the most *frightful Language* . . . If this has its intended Effect upon *one* or *two weak Women*, the Shrieks catch from one to another, till a great Part of the Congregation is affected" ("A Letter from a Gentleman . . . "; Bushman 1989: 118–19). Unwritten sermons that had not been worked out through the conventionally preinscribed heuristic designs were thought particularly vulnerable to error and heresy, and blasphemous for the tacit assumption that ministers were, if not endued with the Spirit, as the Apostles and disciples had been on the day of Pentecost,

guilty of encouraging the impression that they were conduits for divine inspiration or revelation.

While we need not accept Burke's theory that the sermon's use of a primitive, rustic, and highly visual language made the lower classes more susceptible to the influence of powerful preachers, we should take seriously a widely held perception that visual rhetoric could bypass cognitive processes to trigger human emotions, essentially disengaging the mind's mechanism of rational, regulative control. Because visual language circumvented the normative sequence of the faculty psychology, subordinating reason to passion or bypassing the rational faculty altogether and allowing the imagination free play, it inclined individuals to extremes of enthusiasm. It made them susceptible to false spiritual impressions, according to the rational theologians like Chauncy.

Interestingly, Burke's notion that religious rhetoric is at its roots political, that renegade preachers use language to produce social upheaval, confirms a longstanding suspicion that Protestantism would undermine social hierarchies. Within the ranks of the lower classes, Burke and other rationalists saw the danger of the enthusiastic preacher as an Old Testament prophet sowing the wind to reap a whirlwind of social disorder and chaos. Built into Protestantism's core precepts was a social democratization that significantly contributed to the shape of nineteenth-century American political populism, as Nathan O. Hatch (1989) and Mark Noll (2002) have shown. By making individuals their own emissary before the altar of God, Protestantism crossed over to foster a sense of political entitlement, giving any person's perspective equal authority with any other's. If this principle in incipient form drove Puritans to cast their lot with the sea and wilderness rather than to concede to the demands of Laudian clerics back in England, it would achieve a high point after the American Revolution, as tens of thousands of Americans, fusing the religious with the political, broke ranks with established churches and ministerial patriarchy and embraced their own autonomous quests to build a redeemer nation.

While not a doctrinal shift of much magnitude, the First Great Awakening was certainly a watershed in terms of religious practice. The indelible mark it made on the sermon was what scholars like Harry S. Stout have identified as a new mode of persuasion, one that would ultimately appeal less to the head than to the heart (Stout 1986). Yet in comparison with the popular religious revivals gathered under the rubric of the Second Great Awakening, the First was still very much a bookish affair and a theological and intramural dialogue among an elite body of clergy. Even radical attacks on the pulpit, epitomized in the wild-eyed prophesying and book burning of the erratic James Davenport, were largely assaults on a tightly reined fraternity. But the vivid imagery that Edmund Burke had decried in the sermons of the First Great Awakening would have a wider impact in the Second, as Jonathan Edwards' heirs – including Timothy Dwight and Samuel Hopkins, and in the next generation, Charles Finney, Lyman Beecher, and Nathaniel Taylor – frightened their backsliding parishioners into reform.

The Second Great Awakening

As he traveled the United States in the late 1820s and early 1830s to gather notes for what would become (in translation) *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville made a connection among religion, nationalism, and democracy in Jacksonian America: "America is . . . the place in the world where the Christian religion has most preserved genuine powers over souls; and nothing shows better how useful and natural to man it is in our day, since the country in which it exercises the greatest empire is at the same time the most enlightened and most free." Touring the East, Tocqueville had ample opportunity to witness the numerous rival fires burning throughout the country, and, as his assessment suggests, Winthrop's dream of an exemplary city on a hill had lost nothing of its exceptionalism, even if it had discarded its isolationist stance for an ideology of salvation through Christian imperialism.

It is not by chance that the Second Great Awakening burst onto the scene in the post-Revolutionary era. Ignited by what many perceived to be the democratic and populist values of the parties of Jefferson and, later, Jackson, the United States entered an iconoclastic era in which Americans, rejecting the perceived elitism of the Federalists, began dismantling class hierarchy, birth privilege, and other forms of perceived elitism. But to say that the egalitarian nature of universal salvation reflected Jacksonian-era ideals misses the point that this period was itself a product of a generation weaned on an expectation of spiritual and increasingly social equality. Architects of the Second Great Awakening like Timothy Dwight, Taylor, Finney, and Beecher stressed volition, the individual's capacity to will or nil freely in good and evil. In so doing, this generation turned the tide against traditional Calvinist doctrines that, by stressing innate depravity, human passivity in salvation, and spiritual election, had for generations diminished the human faculty of volition. Moreover, by emphasizing individuals' self-knowledge of their own conversion and sanctification, ministers of the Second Great Awakening gave salvation a mechanistic trigger, discarding the crippling, lifelong introspection advocated by their predecessors as an assurance of salvation. By relying on a conversion experience unscreened by clergy, doctrine, or creed, revivalist preachers filled ordinary men and women with a sense of their spiritual vitality and aptitude, generating a sense of self-importance for the part they played in the moral fortification of the nation.

In the first decades of the new century, the Second Great Awakening became one of the most powerful cultural forces in the nation, drawing energy from popular evangelical revivals. Particularly savvy about parlaying Americans' patriotism for their post-Revolutionary nation into a deeper devotion for their spiritual community, revivalists pressed Republican values into the service of Christian networking to take possession of the political field prepared by the Jeffersonians. Yoking the Jeffersonian natural-rights liberalism with Christianity's socially conservative idiom – a contradiction that would, a generation later, lend currency to abolitionist arguments – these evangelical leaders peppered their periodicals, broadsides, and pamphlets with

aphorisms calculated to tap the liberal, libertarian, and populist political ethos still saturating the working-class districts and rural zones of the post-Revolution nation. Promising the balm of "sweet Gospel liberty," the "unalienable right" to pursue "scripture wherever it leads," and freedom from the oppression of "an elite class," preachers like Stone, Campbell, and O'Kelly harnessed the pent up resentment that "common people" felt for what they deemed exploitation by "privileged classes." In so doing, revivalists and their converts naturalized the similarities between Republican egalitarianism and evangelical iconoclasm, suggesting to many that America was destined as a redeemer nation occupied by a chosen people whose bonds had been forged in Godly virtues and service and tempered by self-denial, suffering, and sacrifice.

This egalitarianism and iconoclasm fostered a century of unprecedented religious schism, as denominations – the new term coming into vogue for splinter faiths – emerged in enormous numbers, from radical enthusiasts to the more deistic rationalists. The legacy of rationalist theology in eastern Massachusetts, for instance, which had opposed the enthusiasm of the First Great Awakening, emerged after the war in the practical, rational theology of Unitarianism. While moderate Congregationalists like Beecher and Finney were distracted by the growing popularity of Unitarianism in Boston, a different enemy to orthodoxy rose in popular religious movements led by Alexander Campbell, Lorenzo Dow, Barton Stone, James O'Kelly, William Miller, and Joseph Smith, all of whom had imbibed deeply from the well of Republicanism. These young "apostates" refused to countenance anything that smacked of church governance or organization, claiming that true religion resided solely in the hands of the common people. Enlisting the power of the new technologies of mass media – cylinder presses, lyceum circuits, railroad transportation – these "Christians," a populist slur that marked their break with the "pure" faiths (the Baptists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians), reached tens of thousands of readers, their words penetrating deep into the nation's interior long before they appeared in person to reap the harvest their words had sown.

By the mid-point of the Second Great Awakening, the five principle faiths of the First had splintered into more than thirty Protestant sects. The increase speaks, not only to the power of new technologies, the disintegration of colonial hierarchies, and the dismantling of traditional ministerial authority, but also to a dramatic rise in literacy rates, and increases in immigrant communities who imported their own religious beliefs intact. The fervor of evangelical proselytizing during the Awakenings and increasing access to a diversity of sermons in print only hastened the growth of religious plurality. New denominations splintered from the older faiths of Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Quakers with enough theology and tradition in tow to form lasting doctrines. Among the literally thousands of family-sized fringe groups, emerged influential denominations like Antimission Baptists, Free Will Baptists, Seventh Day Baptists, and Six Principle Baptists; Disciples of Christ and Mormons; Smithites, Campbellites, and Hicksite Quakers; and Unitarians and Universalists. Some denominations burned out quickly, serving as

vanguards of specific theological change, only to be reassimilated into the older, more orthodox forms when their liberal theological or political principles had been absorbed into the status quo of popular liberal progressivism.

Demographics played a powerful role in the new movements, as charismatic religious figures filled social voids produced by cultural rupture, broken families, high mortality rates, immigration, itinerancy, and migration. In the stead of eclipsed social structures, absent parents and friends, and the social proscription of family genealogy, powerful roving preachers such as Dow, Stone, Campbell and others provided a familial, if not paternal, mooring. Joseph Smith's Mormon movement epitomized these alternative societies and the charismatic leaders who offered a lifeline to those set adrift by the extremes of poverty or who lacked opportunities reserved for status. Smith's denunciations of the privileged classes whose Federalist sympathies preserved rigid colonial hierarchies drew disciples whose animosity, born of the indifference traditional religious institutions exhibited toward the plight of the laboring poor, found outlet in revivalists' advocacy for social leveling and denouncements of both secular and traditionally religious societies.

No network better illustrates the social and cultural changes that would alter American Protestantism or the conventions of sermon and preaching than Methodism, a movement born out of the piety of the First Great Awakening and fueled by the popular energies of the Second. The Methodist "Connection" began as a religious fellowship within the Anglican devotion at Oxford in the 1730s, and would later boast the great revivalist and religious architects, John Wesley ("father of Methodism"), his brother Charles, and their friend George Whitefield, perhaps the most charismatic preacher in the eighteenth century. Methodism would alter Christian preaching as no other movement since the Reformation. While small religious sects such as the Lollards and Moravians (Continental Pietists) had innovated open-field preaching, the Methodists under the leadership of Wesley and Whitefield in England and Asbury in America would popularize field-preaching and exhorters, men and women with no formal religious training and not ordained by the Church of England, drawing thousands of auditors from all religious affiliations. The Methodist blueprint for revivals – especially its break with Calvinism's doctrine of predestination (and thus with Whitefield) – would provide the pattern for the Second Great Awakening, and its methods would make the Cane Ridge revival in 1798 a template for revivals across the country.

Wesley's compromise on the doctrine of election made Methodist theology unacceptable to Scottish Presbyterians, many influential American Congregationalists (Calvinists), and the Anglican Church. While he allowed that a small portion of Christians received assurance of their salvation during their lives, he believed all Christians capable of redemption. Those "born-again" – even when their doubts about sanctification persisted – who led lives largely free from sin would also receive the gift of grace. Such a doctrine of universal redemption and salvation appealed to large numbers of the poor, women, and African Americans, free and enslaved, who, because material success was too often taken as the markers of election, remained the least likely to experience the assurance of grace.

While Methodism began as a small community of Anglican seminary students, it quickly became a movement seeking to administer to the poor, particularly tenant farmers and laborers attached to the landed estates. As the Wesleys and Whitefield turned their desire for a communal experience among the ultra-pious into an outward movement of evangelism, they entered upon a path of religious democratization that would gradually diminish the significance placed on traditional Anglican creeds, rites, and rituals, the markers of formalism that had done much to support the class and cultural hierarchies in British society. America's post-Revolutionary, Republican sentiment created the conditions that would allow Methodism to flourish, out-pacing all other denominations. With a low tolerance for class privilege, Americans embraced Methodist exhorters who were more at home in the rural towns and on frontier outposts of the new nation than their seminary brethren.

Bishop Francis Asbury (1745–1816) was the key figure in the transatlantic migration of Methodism. Taking up the Wesleyan emphasis on universal redemption, Asbury trained a salvation army of itinerant exhorters to ride circuits from the eastern seaboard to frontiers throughout the nation. A typical admonition to one of his itinerants in 1788 underscores the impact of Universalist evangelicalism on sermon form:

> If possible visit from house to house . . . to speak to each in the family about their souls . . . Sermons ought to be short and pointed in town, briefly explanatory and then to press the people to conviction, repentance, faith and holiness . . . So shall we speak . . . by life and application in the heart, little illustration and great fervency . . . [is] the spark of life.

No one better epitomized the adventurous spirit of Methodist circuit riders than Asbury himself, who, accompanied by African American and women exhorters, logged thousands of miles a year on horseback ministering to the nation's most indigent and isolated inhabitants. Marginally educated ministers preached extempore to illiterate audiences, leaving no record of their sermons or work in the field. Camps of thousands dismantled in the early dawn, leaving little in their wake but the embers of campfires, fields trampled by African American "ring shouts" and the paroxysms of anguish and joy of prostrate penitents, and the contrite hearts of local supplicants newly "slain" by the word.

To social elites and religious conservatives, this rag-tag regiment appeared vulgar and uncouth. As Christiana Tillson confided in her diary, "ranting and raving," itinerant Methodists who came to her Illinois frontier town "evinced so much arrogance and self display and such unblushing impudence as to repel me" (Quaife 1995: 42). While Tillson's comments reflect a distaste for enthusiasm and a conventional reverence for traditional religion and formal worship, they also reveal the shift in forensic style from the orthodox pulpit sermon to the extempore "sermonizing" associated with revival evangelicalism. This shift was attended by a deeper middle-class anxiety about the make-up of the crowds of enthusiastic worshipers drawn to the

charismatic revivalists as well as Methodism's perceived social transgressions: the movement's post-Revolution abolitionism, its elevation of women and African Americans in the ranks of revival and circuit ministries, and its seemingly clandestine activity. Frequent comparisons between Methodists and Roman Catholics appeared in editorials throughout the nation, leading to public denouncements of Methodist meetings, and, on occasion, to persecution.

As towns emerged from the dust of frontier settlements and the mud of riverside encampments, and as dramatic increases in converts required the service of fixed institutions, Methodism was eventually compelled to alter its emphasis from conversion to sustaining faith. By building institutions that could nurture families and children and address educational and social needs, Methodism changed to meet the demographic demands for a "settled" ministry. Communities that were once little more than outposts on the verge of western wilderness soon wooed some of the most renowned ministers of the age. Cincinnati, Ohio won not only the renowned Lyman Beecher, but most of his distinguished children as well. In the wake of a student revolt at Beecher's Lane seminary over the admission of African American students, Lane students jumped ship to Oberlin, Ohio, where the new seminary had successfully sought the equally renowned Finney.

The form of the sermon was transformed after the Revolution as pulpit and pew were increasingly displaced by the tent and open air revivals that drew thousands, and as licensed, educated ministers saw their cultural authority eroded by untrained and unordained exhorters from lay professions, like Lorenzo Dow, or, half a century later, the renowned Billy Sunday. As ministers sought to connect and commiserate with the anxiety, suffering, and misery of the poorest classes of Americans, their sermons drew upon the deepest emotions, plumbing with words for auditors' secret fears, anger, hatred, love, and joy. In a sentiment shared with Baptists and Congregationalists, Asbury exhorted his ministerial charges to "preach as if you had seen heaven and its celestial inhabitants and had hovered over the bottomless pit and beheld the tortures and heard the groans of the damned" (Clark 1958 II: 785). Dow provoked the contempt of the religious establishment for his coarse language, his inattention to grammar, and biting sarcasm with which he skewered the most eminent ministers of the day. Dow and Elias Smith took religious iconoclasm to new extremes as they fractured the language, intoning the most cherished religious sentiments in the rustic idiom of the uneducated.

Substantiating Burke's fear of the power of language to embody images and thus exercise inordinate power over human passions, these exhorters preached sermons filled with visual images to audiences prepared for the power of visual rhetoric. John Jasper, the Baptist itinerant from Virginia, was famed for speaking in "picture language," as he created with "daguerreotype vividness" the gospel message as it must have been heard, his imitators believed, on the day of Pentecost. The folk preaching of Dow, Stone, and others provides an important index of how vital religion had become to ordinary individuals in the young Republic. Ministers and exhorters seemed locked into a contest to out do each other in the number of souls they slew with words. In vivid

images depicting the eternal anguish of hell, ministers scorched the ears of their parishioners with the hot hail of fire and brimstone. The great postbellum minister Washington Gladden recalled the Elder Jacob Knapp's "sensational savagery" emblematized in sermons projecting "terrors of the future." "Fear," he wrote, remembering back more than half a century, "was always haunting me in my childhood; my most horrible dreams were of that place of torment" (Gladden 1909: 59).

From the distance of more than a century, it is easy to share Gladden's judgment of this sermon convention as little more than sensational savagery. Why did the sermon among the Baptists, Methodists, and Congregationalists become so sensational, even gothic? While the vivid, frightening language of the sermon predates eighteenth-century gothic fiction, the two genres drew upon one another. Where the sermon borrowed narrative from fiction, fiction borrowed the sermon's interest in readership psychology and the older forensic strategies evolving out of medieval systems of logic. From the jealous, vengeful God bequeathed to the Puritans by Augustine's picture of human morality, came the brooding, tyrannical patriarchs in works by such authors as Ann Radcliffe, Charles Brockden Brown, George Lippard, and Louisa May Alcott. Both genres benefited from an age fascinated by interiority, the ever-present surveillance implied by the concept of an omniscient God, and the psychological aberrations, coping mechanisms, and mental limits shaped by the contest between subjection and subjectivity emerging out of the devotional exercises of extended introspection.

As we have seen, sermons of the First Great Awakening had already begun to change to reflect the shifting understandings of conversion. The Second Awakening saw an escalation of this shift. Finney and Knapp's visually evocative preaching staged the drama of repentance, marked by fits and starts. Representative of preaching during the Second Great Awakening, their sermons both imitated and precipitated the unfolding psychology that prepared the supplicant's heart for baptism, parsing out sorrow, remorse, and rapture in ecstatic but measured waves of emotion. An evening of self-scrutiny and intense self-reproach, attended by wailing and weeping, led many to shed their "old man," and, through the symbolic immersion in the "stream of life," surface at the river's bank born anew, free from the bondage of sin. Ruptures and discontinuities – like the fainting and memory loss often accompanying revival fervency, baptism as a symbolic death, the manic-depressive cycles produced by revival fervor, and abrupt, life-altering breaks with vice, vocations, and family – became important markers of conversion. That the sermon's gothic narrative reproduced precisely these ruptures and discontinuities helps explain the "sensational savagery" of the revival sermon tradition. Fragmentary, beginning in the middle of the story, filled with fainting heroines whose stories abruptly terminate, or villains who die in the midst of confession, the tropes of gothic fiction replicate the epistemological or evidentiary crises posed by the penitent's sudden shift from a material-based knowledge accrued through the senses to his or her initial blindness (often figured by Paul's conversion) in the spiritual world, where the senses and empirical evidence have no traction. In the hope that effect might drive cause, the sermon's gothic narrative creates the initial condition of regeneration, utter sensory

deprivation. For the converted, sight becomes an inward organ, as initiates learn the meaning of revivalism's Pauline credo: "we walk by faith and not by sight."

Following the Revolution, then, the sermon had gradually become informal, personal, and narrative-driven; its form and content, like the essay, rendered more elastic and familiar. Nineteenth-century ministers began using sustained homilies and fictionalized plots to illustrate theological points, to demonstrate in evocative detail the wages of sin and the glory of salvation, and to connect communal redemption through social relief to the individual's spiritual maturation. As Protestant theology increasingly admitted the universal dignity of humanity, the sermon became a powerful tool for spiritual expression and, by its magnification of the innate worth of individuals, a vital instrument and impetus for social reform.

Women and Revivals

The Second Great Awakening opened up new avenues for women and African Americans in the forum of public worship. Taking advantage of the political populism emerging out of the Revolution, American evangelicals were united in their distrust of social hierarchy and jealous of the least liberty, and for nearly two generations the principle they guarded accorded new social freedom to many women and African Americans. At the same time, an absorption with Christ's suffering led to the rise of a theology of atonement that viewed Christ's sacrifice as an injunction to social leveling. When conjoined with the national pride Americans took in their patriotic sacrifices for the nation, this new theology brought about a revaluation of the dignity and spirituality of the poorest classes by virtue of their similarity to Christ's own poverty. The focus on Christ's suffering granted spiritual prestige to ordinary suffering, poverty, disease, death, and tragedy, popularizing religious humanism and diminishing the distinctions of class, gender, and, for a brief time, even race. In the intensity of revivals and frenzied conversions, perceived ontological differences further receded. The romanticism of poverty and enshrinement of the simple faith attributed to the poor recast women and African Americans in a new light, which, taken together with the putative perception of their heightened sensitivity to spiritual awakening, further fostered emerging stereotypes that cut both ways. While the simple but ardent faith attributed to women and African Americans – and Native Americans such as the self-styled "son of the forest" William Apess and Samson Occom – entitled them to larger roles within religious practice, earning them special reverence within faith circles, the naive and innocent (if not childlike) dispositions attributed to the super-spiritual validated and predetermined racial and gendered assumptions, justifying paternalistic regulation and political and social isolation.

Several women became powerful preachers in the early years of the Second Great Awakening. While traditional hierarchies left them out of the organization of "formalist" churches, evangelical revivalists came to recognize the value of women

as organizers, as exemplary models of piety, and as fervent guides to the spiritually burdened. Perceived as gifted in their ability to elicit shame, confession, and contrition from even recalcitrant reprobates and recidivists, women translated their emotional and moral suasion into powerful sermons. Unlike their male counterparts who exploited their parishioners' fears by invoking hellish images of eternal suffering, women preachers tended to focus on such compassionate themes as God's love and mercy, emphasizing Christ's sorrow for the lost sinner and the rejoicing of his angelic hosts when he or she was found. While gender initially shaped the spiritual discourse in the first decades after the Revolution, male preachers soon adopted the powerful emotional appeal popularized by women. In so doing, they contributed to the destabilization of conventional gender identification. Gradually, the gendered self lost meaning as a physical difference in its union with Christ, as the rival sermon tradition conflated erstwhile normative gender characterizations: while women became officers, soldiers, warriors, and infantrymen in salvation's army, men in turn also became figured as brides of Christ (a revitalized Puritan and monastic metaphor), to be ravished by the spirit in a platonic union with the redeemer bridegroom. The feminization of men in Christ paralleled the feminization of the citizen in republican discourse, in which men and women were both figured as brides of the state in their affection for, and obligation to, the masculine nation.

Methodist societies became havens for single women. Given the seriousness with which people attended to religious duties, these meetings offered rare opportunities for women to come together, to commune with one another in a sanctified, and thus socially sanctioned, space away from the toil and isolation of their everyday lives. Devotional labor in revival camps and other religious settings fostered same-sex communities and offered women a sense of identity apart from the drudgery of restrictive social roles. Not surprisingly, women participated in greater numbers in evangelical revivals, providing both the working musculature of most religious bodies and the bonds of religious sociability that replaced the ceremonial life traditionally furnished by the more formal and traditional churches.

Women worked behind the scenes of evangelical organizations, but they also took prominent, if controversial, leadership roles in public worship. Nancy Grove Cram, for instance, who died in 1815 after a short-lived fame as an exhorter, lit the fires of revival in New York. Plucked from obscurity by an audience moved by her piety, she drew crowds with her homiletic sermons that she delivered in open fields, barns, and from platforms mounted on wagons. Yet when her following desired to form a church, Cram was forced to recruit male elders to organize the church and administer the sacrament. While the church government she organized ultimately dismissed her on scriptural grounds that rejected women's role in church governance, her following in the revival camps increased in number and in their devotion to her.

The journals and sermons of women preachers in the first half of the nineteenth century reveal an extraordinary capacity for emotional expression and sympathetic connections with the suffering of others. They demonstrate a spiritual intuition and receptivity to revelation not as apparent in the sermons and journals of their male

contemporaries until a generation later, when evangelicalism would converge with spiritualism and clairvoyance. From women's journals flowed an inspirational emotionalism that found its way into the sermon tradition. In the Puritan tradition of autobiographical hagiography – the life as model for salvation – Jarena Lee used her life story to influence a generation of black exhorters, including the famous Zilpha Elaw, who, for a time, traveled the sermon trail alongside Lee. On a parallel path, the free black seamstress Rebecca Jackson used her own spiritual life as fodder for her sermons, drawing a large following into the black Shaker community she founded in Philadelphia.

The criticism women preachers endured in the period offers a telling picture of their contribution to the democratization of Christianity. Threatened by their popularity, traditionalists dismissed women's sermons for their alleged lack of organization, their associational rather than logical arguments, and their tendency toward homiletic illustration. Despite the initial criticism, however, women's sermons would become increasingly commonplace and influential as the century wore on, as male clergy, increasingly without formal education, began adopting an interpersonal approach to preaching, and as more prominent men publicly owned their conversion experience at the hands of women exhorters. According to the eminent minister David Millard, for example, Nancy Cram awakened him and several other popular male preachers to their spiritual peril and calling in the ministry. It would be a mistake to underestimate the effect early women exhorters had on shaping sermon rhetoric in what was called the "harvestfield."

Through both their preaching and authorship, women increasingly expanded the conventional vocabulary, forensic style, and sermon form traditionally available to ministers for recruiting the disaffected, saving the lost, and magnifying the emotional experience of the already saved. Catherine Ferguson, an emancipated slave, preached to an interracial Sunday school class in New York in the early part of the nineteenth century, one of a vast connection of women who created a pattern of spiritual communion and distilled a common vocabulary and exegetical tradition that would unite a generation of late antebellum Northerners. New York sisters Phoebe Worrall Palmer (1807–74) and Sarah Worall Lankford ran the Tuesday meeting for the Promotion of Holiness, with their young cohort of women in the new "holiness movement" of American Methodism. Against the mechanistic, sensory evidence esteemed by rationalism and at the core of masculine religious discourse, these sisters taught that suffering and identification with others' suffering was the one experience shared by rich and poor, men and women, and individuals of all races.

African American Protestantism

African Americans, enslaved and free, joined the Protestant fold in dramatic numbers during the Second Great Awakening. In the steps of Whitefield and Wesley's religious missions in Georgia in the 1740s, Baptists, Methodists, and Congregationalists began

proselytizing on Southern plantations in the last two decades before the Revolution. Only with the Second Great Awakening did black evangelicalism begin to emerge, as white missionaries carried the gospel message throughout the South. While initially opposing slavery, evangelical preachers largely ceased their denunciations by 1820, capitulating to the planter code that emphasized the racial uplift people of African descent received through contact with "civilization" and Christian salvation. Giving voice to that code's insistence on the beneficence of plantation patriarchy and the biblical injunction for servants to submit to the will of their masters, ministers sanctioned the authority of fathers and masters. Beholden to Southern political structures in a way their itinerant predecessors were not, settled ministers acquiesced to the demands of local congregations, regional customs, and agrarian codes steeped in feudal antiquity.

As Baptists and Methodists in the South abandoned their anti-slavery positions, a regional divide opened up in what were fairly homogeneous denominational movements. Deepening by 1830, the schism developed two parallel Christian nations, each anchored in a particular set of biblical interpretations. Each region created in its own image a scripturally based portrait of the Christ it served. Northern evangelical sermons favored the Pauline construction of a martial Christ whose followers, bearing the "whole armor of God," served and sacrificed as soldiers in the holy cause. Emphasizing a long-suffering Christ, Southern sermons encouraged the downtrodden – free and enslaved – to look to the eternal rather than temporal world for their reward. By promoting suffering and resignation as badges of salvation, the Southern sermon justified slavery and peddled obedience as the path to salvation. As these divergent ideologies developed they shaped the sermon tradition, bequeathing to the North an invigorated Jeremiad tradition that threatened the land with God's holy wrath, making such movements as abolitionism, temperance, and women's suffrage heir to militaristic structures and a denunciation-style sermon and giving birth to the African American Jeremiad. The South's sermon tradition, until the last decade before the Civil War, counseled resignation, perseverance, meekness, and suffering, providing the social anesthesia that allowed a society sharply divided into free and enslaved, rich and poor, to enjoy relative stability. Each region's regnant themes are evident in the sermon tradition: as the industrializing North found in Christianity the scriptural warrant for their interventionist attitude toward social reform, the agrarian South found the social glue to bond communities divided by rigid hereditary hierarchies and chattel slavery.

While the stress on spiritual complacency at times reconciled African Americans and a serf-class of sharecroppers to allotted stations within agrarian social structures, it also had the reverse effect. The emphasis placed on duty to the master internalized a destructive contradiction. As black sermons and slave narratives illustrated, a social system that debased humans put temporal imperatives at odds with spiritual, placing slaves in the position of serving two masters – which, the Bible warned, induced servants to "hate the one, and love the other." Additionally, the glorification of suffering was an unsteady currency, readily convertible from suffering in slavery

to suffering against slavery. Finally, evangelicalism laid the infrastructure for black alliances and networks that channeled information in and out of plantations that had once exploited their isolation as a form of social control and containment. By mid-century, black evangelical networks were linked to Northern churches, the abolitionist community, and the underground railroad, and all three of these institutions depended for their success on the invisible web of black Christian association.

By the 1820s, gifted African American exhorters began to emerge in slave and free black communities throughout the nation, many in the Methodist Connection. In New York and New Jersey, two remarkable fugitive slaves began exhorting to newly freed and enslaved African Americans. Sojourner Truth and Jarena Lee became regional heroines during their lives and national legends after their deaths for their tireless assault on slavery. Many African Americans who took up the cloth, like Richard Allen, Absalom Jones, Daniel Alexander Payne, and Harry Hosier, had been born into slavery but achieved their freedom to become Methodist preachers and outspoken critics of the church's complacency toward slavery. Unlike Allen and Payne, however, few blacks were licensed within the ministerial ranks. As Methodism gradually accepted and even justified slavery in the decades following the Revolution, free blacks increasingly had to endure second-class status in traditional churches. The growing racial inequality among American Methodists was a particularly bitter pill for Allen, who had logged thousands of miles on the circuit preaching and converting whites alongside the father of American Methodism, Bishop Asbury. Dragged from a prayer meeting along with a large group of his spiritual charges in Philadelphia in 1816 to make room for white congregants, Allen finalized the break with white Methodism by founding the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church.

Much of what we know about the black sermon tradition comes to us through slave narratives, spiritual journals, and the dynamic religious tradition that thrives today. Relatively few eighteenth and nineteenth-century black sermons have come down to us, and those that have come primarily from within the formalist tradition. The devastation of the diaspora on African linguistic identity, the regnant place of oral tradition within pan-African culture, the Baptist emphasis on the direct religious experience, and proscriptions against black literacy in the antebellum South shaped black evangelicalism apart from the more discursive sermon conventions of white religion. The form of black evangelical practice – much like the form evolving in rural, white areas with low literacy rates – did little to preserve individual sermons. Spontaneous preaching characterized the dynamic and interactive nature of black worship. As African American converts formed their own religious coteries – on the margins and in the midst of white revival gatherings – they began to develop distinctive styles, fusing African religious rituals with traditional Christian forms to create new practices at once American and African. In some instances, black worship helped to preserve and extend the religious practices of the earliest camp revivals, including the enthusiasm that gave name to the "Shouting Methodists," the ring dances, and the call-and-response sermon tradition that would later emerge in the gospel hymn. Drawing on African tribal ritual and

evangelical revival practice, audience participation became a permanent, visible feature of black public worship. Dancing, impassioned displays, charismatic preaching, torch-light parades, ring dances, typological enactment, "songfests," "love-feasts," and "deaconing" – the popular name for call-and-response exhortation in sermon and song – fanned audience fervor, and helped weld free blacks to their enslaved brothers and sisters in a pageantry of spiritual communion and in refrains that unified voices, cultural ties, and religious outlook.

While sermons delivered to whites attempted to break down the prideful, disaffected, and impenitent, black sermons tended to uplift, promising auditors a liberty that collapsed physical and spiritual freedom into each other, such that in these sermons, as in black spirituals, the term "jubilee" came to signify both emancipation and the Resurrection. Black spiritual vocabulary systematically differed from white in precisely this way: it employed tropes of liberty literally rather than metaphorically. Whereas sermons for white audiences referred to bondage to sin and appetite, or humanity's enslavement to pleasure and vice, black exhorters emphasized spiritual freedom and the soaring capacity of the human will. By stressing the dichotomy between body and spirit, the black sermon tradition emphasized the spirit's autonomy – the soul's volition and hermetic purity – even when the physical body was coerced into doing another's bidding or polluted by another's agency.

Like Lutherans, African American preachers rejected the book-chapter-verse approach of nineteenth-century Bible Onlyism, instead turning to the Bible as a source of grand themes for their narrative theology. Laboring under the double burden of cultural identification and education, the black sermon – like the spiritual and slave narrative – drew upon biblical typology that included cycles of captivity, expulsion, exile, spiritual wandering (linked to the diaspora), ascent, and jubilee. Like the Puritan sermons before them, black sermons adapted the Hebrew captivity in Egypt from the Book of Exodus as the central trope in camp enactments referred to as "body narratives." In this sacred drama played out in ordinary life, leaders from Fredrick Douglass, James W. C. Pennington, and Sojourner Truth to Booker T. Washington and Martin Luther King accepted the symbolic mantle of Moses leading the captive or oppressed through tribulation to a promised land.

Edmund Burke's comments on the sermon and preaching unwittingly forecast the historical development of Protestantism: its iconoclastic tendency to break down hierarchical structures, its predilection toward populism, plebiscitary democracy, and, unimpeded, the tyranny of the majority. If Burke meant that by fostering personal autonomy individuals would seek social status above their station, his fears were not unfounded. The history of the sermon is bound up with revolution: religious, associated with the Reformation; political, associated with the emergence of American nationalism; and social, associated with entrance of women, African Americans, and disenfranchised classes into spiritual leadership. In each of these cases, the sermon evolved in ways that challenged established truths, as well as time-honored assumptions about human psychology and the individual's capacity for autonomy – a remarkable illustration of the power of logos in Western culture.

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25

Neither Here Nor There: Transatlantic Epistolarity in Early America

Phillip H. Round

The New World arrived in the Old sealed in the folds of a transatlantic letter. For three centuries after Columbus' first report of the Americas, epistolary discourse dominated the many linguistic regimes that Europeans, indigenous peoples, and Africans employed to mediate exchanges between the two worlds. Early modern transatlantic letters encode an elusive set of cultural technologies. Their producers and interlocutors were neither here nor there – separated by geographic distance and great stretches of time, yet they clung to the familiar social, civil, and religious bonds that had sustained them in Europe. Although letters to and from the Americas have been characterized as a "fundamental instrument of administrative control and government" (Mignolo 2003: 172), in practice, such letters were just as likely to exhibit what Roger Chartier, following Michel de Certeau, has called "everyday writing." Within the imperial administrations of Spain, Portugal, Holland, France, and England, the familiar letter offered both colonizers and the colonized, from up and down the social strata, "silent technologies [to] . . . short-circuit institutional stage directions." At once obligatory and impulsive, improvisational and codified, early modern transatlantic letters were "always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized 'on the wing' " (De Certeau 1998: xiv, xix).

In 1493, when Columbus first wrote about America, the familiar letter was undergoing changes to accommodate new modes of social interaction then emerging across Europe. While letter writing had flourished throughout the Middle Ages, Renaissance intellectuals, in their multidisciplinary effort to revive classical learning, sought to free themselves from the Medieval *ars dictamanis*, the rigid rhetoric of letter writing disseminated by dictaminal treatises and model letter formularies. The *ars dictaminis* tradition strictly observed the etiquette of social hierarchy and thereby eschewed the use of everyday language and forms of address. As part of his larger project of intellectual reform, Erasmus attacked the rigidity of the medieval system,

devoting an entire book to the craft of writing letters. In *De Conscribendius Epistolaris* (1522) he redefined the role of epistolary discourse, calling letters "a mutual conversation between absent friends, which should be neither unpolished, rough, or artificial, nor confined to a single topic" (Erasmus 1978: 20). Erasmus' detailed exploration of the epistolary genre reflected a growing recognition among sixteenth-century humanists that some form of "everyday" writing was needed to manage new discourses of rhetorical instruction and social exchange.

Perhaps the most important contribution of humanist epistolarity came in the way the form itself began to embody new modes of human interaction. As Erasmus explained it, "as befits any good go-between," a letter "performs the function of a messenger." Early modern letters acted as "go-betweens" in a number of important ways. Claudio Guillén has demonstrated that the Renaissance letter not only communicated everything from gossip to business and diplomacy, but also "signified a crucial passage from orality to writing itself – or a practical interaction between the two" (Guillén 1986: 78). Letters mediated between "ordinary" writing and extraordinary experiences. While constituting "one sort of . . . everyday and private writing, like the accounts book, the recipe book, or the family record book" (Chartier 1997: 2), letters could also be startlingly transgressive. In a letter, "the humblest citizen may dispatch a missive to the highest reaches of the political, social, or cultural hierarchy . . . bypass[ing] all intermediaries standing between ordinary public opinion and decision makers" (Boureau 1997: 24–5).

Historically speaking, the familiar letter emerged at the intersection of several important nodes of the expanding European world system. The recovery of classical epistolary practices coincided with larger social revolutions like state formation and the spread of literacy. The emergence of the bureaucratic states of the late Middle Ages was in fact closely linked to the appearance of epistolary formularies that codified new administrative languages and epistolary forms. The Renaissance expansion of these same states into the Americas constituted an even greater degree of "the geographical isolation of human settlements and the complexity of seigniorial relations" (Boreau 1997: 36) that had spawned the new fashions in letter writing in the first place. Just as European colonial expansion provided impetus to the extension of bureaucracies through formulaic letters surrounding diplomacy and statecraft, so did the greater geographic isolation of these colonies put pressure on the epistolary form to speak from an absent presence about the reality of lands, peoples, and politics that few European correspondents would ever witness in person.

Yet speaking from the absent presence of the New World proved to be a very anxious rhetorical position for all involved. At the outset of European colonization, Diego Alvarez Chanca, a Spanish physician who accompanied the second Columbus expedition, concluded his 1494 public letter on the voyage with a protest that would become a commonplace in transatlantic letters over the centuries: "I believe that those who do not know me and who hear these things may find me prolix and a man who has exaggerated somewhat. But God is witness that I have not gone one iota beyond the bounds of truth" (Jane 1930a: 72). Poised on the anxious edge of incredulity,

pleading for understanding, acceptance, and (quite often) for preferment or supplies, the early modern transatlantic letter proffered a unique form of subjectivity for both writer and reader. As a mining entrepreneur in New Spain discovered in 1595 when he wrote to a metropolitan merchant for help, the virtual economics of New World colonization had transformed letter writing into a complex substitute for interpersonal relationships. After a polite salutation, Nicholas de Guevara outlined his desperate economic situation and then stopped to muse about the requirements of this new form of epistolarity: "Now that I am writing you, it seems proper to give you an account of my life" (Lockhart and Otte: 1976: 86).

In some senses, neither-here-nor-there subject positions like the one Guevara discovered while writing across the Atlantic were rooted in a tension fundamental to colonial immigration. Settlers were caught between what Jack Greene has called "a highly competitive, individualistic, and acquisitive 'modern' mentality" and "those ideas of moral economy and suspicions of the market usually associated with traditional peasant societies" (Greene 1988: 34). Transatlantic epistolary practices thus reflect their authors' efforts to negotiate premodern and modern modes of social order. In early modern transatlantic letters, time-honored "vertical" social relations were replaced by "fleeting contacts," and their writers, more and more often "strangers" to their metropolitan readers, were left to seek out rhetorical methods of earning trust. Such writers had to find new ways to sustain interpersonal connections that, in the metropolis, had been nurtured by face-to-face contact, kinship, and acquaintance networks. From their culturally "peripheral" position, colonial correspondents exploited emerging letter writing conventions that echoed the gestures of gentility and truth telling as a replacement for traditional or "customary" modes of interaction.

Given the heightened pressure that transatlantic conversation placed on immediacy and embodiment, the material conditions of the transatlantic letter also underscored these features. They sustained transatlantic "scribal publication," extending the social bonds of manuscript communities across the ocean. The reading of a transatlantic letter, often aloud, often in groups, and sometimes accompanied by the envoy who delivered it, became a communal act of reconstituting the voice and gestures of the absent writer. The reader's voice animated the scribal text; the envoy's gestures and exposition fleshed out the bare bones of the necessarily short narrative. Thus, a sixteenth-century colonist writing from New Spain not only communicated news and asked for news in return, but also performed proper social etiquette in the virtual space his missive provided: "I kiss the hands of my good friend Hernando de Uceda and his wife, and they should consider this letter theirs; I kiss the hands of all my lords and friends and ask that they pardon me for not writing them" (Lockhart and Otte 1976: 134).

Beyond the constitutive role they played in early modern European subjectivity, transatlantic letters served a very practical function in the diffusion of knowledge and power across the Atlantic world. Throughout the period, the letter was second in importance only to the caravel in the process of European colonization in the Americas. Indeed, one could argue that from the first, European settlements in

the New World relied almost totally on epistolary mediation. Letters mediated the flow of goods and services, people, politics, and culture, allowing emigrants to maintain their ties to the nation-states they had left behind and to explore the possibilities of the emerging social and cultural identities offered by the New World. Transatlantic epistolary traffic was always already part of the "public" circulation of goods and resources between metropolis and periphery. As John Smith, president of the Jamestown colony, pointed out, letters from the New England colonies often substituted for real profits in the early years of settlement. "Neglecting to answer the Merchants expectations with profit," the early colonists were accused of "feeding the Company only with Letters and tastes of such commodities" (Smith 1986: 271). Transatlantic letters like those of John Smith became marketable commodities in their own right, printed and distributed in the form of news books, open letters, and circulars. Some entered print culture as high cultural artifacts of social refinement or "literary" achievement, and their recipients were imagined as an entire "reading public."

In the final analysis, transatlantic letters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were both "familiar" and bureaucratic. They could be as exotic as Charles Garnier's 1636 birch bark missive from New France, or as mundane as a copy of a ship's bill of lading. Examined from the point of view of transatlantic epistolary exchange, the early cultural history of the Americas is a history of immediacy and embodiment. Over and against interpretations of colonial America as a discursive arena of European mythic fantasy or imperial administration, the epistolary history of the Americas reveals a world constructed of ad hoc arrangements, whose subjects cobbled together their senses of self from the contingencies and compromises that remain sedimented in the thousands of letters patent, *cartas de relación*, verse epistles, and letters of manumission that streamed across the Atlantic throughout the early modern era.

Epistolary Discovery

Columbus' first letter of 1493 describing the New World presents a paradigmatic example of how the epistle would negotiate between monarchical state bureaucracy, the church's sense of the "life-giving power of the letter" (Boreau 1997: 32), and the huge distances of space and time that separated New World peoples and events from their Old World interlocutors. Most importantly, it dramatizes how central the epistolary mode would become in fashioning a European "discourse of discovery." After several centuries of scholarly debate about the status of the Columbus letters as historical evidence, recent work has begun to acknowledge the fundamentally discursive role these letters played – as acts of reading, writing, publishing, and corresponding – in the European discovery of America. The textual histories of the letters written on Columbus' four voyages of discovery highlight how the epistolary mode served *both* the purposes of those in authority who wished to control the meaning of New World exploration and the "tactical" goals of individuals such as Columbus.

They reveal why Columbus, among the many persons involved in the actual voyages, attained personal mythic status as *the* discoverer of the New World.

The first transatlantic letter about the New World is shrouded in mystery. In early 1493, letters bearing the name "Columbus" began to appear in the court of Philip and Isabel, and in print in Spain and Italy. The most well known of these letters, the "Carta a Luis de Santangel" (February 15, 1493), appeared printed in Spanish, Italian, Latin, and Italian verse. Although a manuscript copy in Santangel's hand is preserved in the Archivo General de Simancas, Margarita Zamora points out that "none of [the] versions are identical." The various versions, Zamora adds, "differ quite significantly from the text that was probably their common matrix, the *Carta a los Reyes* of 4 March, 1493." A close reading of all extant copies suggests further that "the February letter was at least substantially revised, if not completely composed by someone other than Columbus" (Zamora 1993: 5–6).

To further the confusion, while Columbus' public letter begins without the standard salutation, all extant versions of the letter bear endorsements – some to the "escribano de ración," Luis de Santangel, some to the Spanish treasurer, Gabriel Sanchez – and these have caused much speculation about the recipient of this first New World example of epistolary discourse. Was Columbus writing to the court? To the treasurer? To the king and queen themselves? Cecil Jane has suggested that Columbus' letter was essentially "of the nature of a draft circular letter enclosed in [a] letter to Ferdinand and Isabella for their approval" (Jane 1930a: 50). Zamora believes that "the significant variation between the . . . texts suggests that one constitutes a reading of the other, an emendation of the scriptural act that created a new and different image of discovery" (Zamora 1993: 9). Whatever the case, it is clear from the endorsements that the letters of Columbus were part of a bureaucratic discourse of state and empire. It is also clear from its immediate 1493 publication in quarto and folio in Spanish, and from the subsequent nine Italian editions of the 1493 Latin translation by Leandro de Cosco, that Columbus' letter was always already a public document. Thus this first letter mobilized a particularly salient technology of social analysis and social reproduction even as it extended that analysis and reproduction well beyond the known European world. The various endorsements that accompany the many versions of the letter show how Columbus sought to secure social standing for himself as a writer and explorer (and also for the reader) outside of the court structures to which the endorsements refer. The reader becomes one of the "insiders," one of those pushing forward New World exploration, and as the letters entered into print culture, they secured a place in the "public sphere."

In the body of the letter, this technology of social reproduction is arrayed across several discourses in order to locate the unknown landscape and peoples of the Americas within the categories of knowledge then accepted by European statesmen and intellectuals. In the Colombian writings, Peter Hulme has identified "two distinct discursive networks . . . what might be called a discourse of *Oriental Civilization* and a *discourse of savagery*," that appear to have their origin in classical texts (Hulme 1986: 21). The 1493 letter invokes several other discursive registers as well.

There is discourse of civil conversation and statecraft, as when Columbus details how he "took possession" of the New World "with proclaiming heralds and flying standards." There is the discourse of natural history, intermingling mercantile practicality with disinterested "science." The islands Columbus encounters are "surrounded by many very safe and wide harbors . . . many great and salubrious rivers flow through it." There is also the discourse of truth-telling. The letter opens and closes with Columbus' assertion of the veracity of his claims. The things Columbus has seen "exceeded belief, unless one had seen them," and he alone can be "relied on for accuracy" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 24, 27).

Columbus devotes over half of his first letter to describing the indigenous people of Hispaniola. Although his description does sound predetermined by the discourse of savagery (Native people are "always naked," "without weapons," "timid and full of fear," and "eat human flesh"), his account of his trade with these people outlines a more complex imperial, millenarian, and mercantile set of motives and discourses. Columbus "gave them many beautiful and pleasing things . . . no value being taken in exchange." He explains that the idea was to make them more friendly toward the Spaniards and accomplish his threefold goals: "that they might be made worshipers of Christ, and that they might be full of love towards our king, queen, prince, and the whole Spanish nation; also that they might be zealous to search out and collect, and deliver to us those things of which they had plenty, and which we greatly needed." Of course, Columbus famously squanders any goodwill earned by seizing "by force several Indians," but his use of these Native people as heralds of his conquest further enlarges the discursive scope of his letter. Columbus' report that he used these captives to proclaim to other indigenous people "in a loud voice 'Come, come, and you will see the celestial people'" (ibid: 25) is the earliest example of the ventriloquism of the colonial subject.

The letter concludes with a coda that attempts to make present a world that, until Columbus' "discovery," had been outside of human time ("which hitherto mortal men have never reached"). Before Columbus' public letter, "if any one ha[d] written or said anything about these islands, it was all obscurities and conjectures." With Columbus, the New World becomes at least a *discursive* reality. His letter reinscribes New World history into Christian time by employing Spanish civic and religious rituals to bridge the gap between the New World and the Old, creating a sort of cultural continuity between the known and the unknown: "Let religious processions be solemnized; let sacred festivals be given; let the churches be covered with festive garlands" (ibid: 27). The letter reaches a level of exhortation that mimics sacramental cadence to instantiate a link between the Old and New World through the rites of civic and religious ceremony. Such ceremonies make the New World a concrete experience for the Old World society that has "discovered" it. The formerly incredible and conjectural is officially "solemnized."

Columbus would write several more letters about the New World, each progressively more apocalyptic as his personal fortune waned and his power to conjure the magic of the New World through his personal control of its representation gave way

to the explorations and discoveries of others. None were published in his lifetime. What remains of Columbus – his reputation and his famous first description of the New World – is a story told by a stranger, made more personal and believable by the epistolary mode in which it was framed.

An Epistolary Imperium

By the dawn of the sixteenth century, transatlantic letters had become the primary means of negotiating the imperial relations of metropolis and periphery, and the social orders of aristocrats, merchants, soldiery, indigenous peoples, laborers, and slaves. Pêro Vaz de Caminha's letter of 1500 to the Portuguese King Dom Manuel I reflects how the generic conventions Columbus established had come to dominate the epistolary side of empire building for European sovereigns and subjects. Sent as a scribe to document the voyage of Pedro Álvares Cabral, Vaz de Caminha begins by asserting that he writes the king only after his military superiors have filed their official reports, and then only in a plain style befitting his station: "I shall neither prettify nor distort nor add anything to what I say and appeared to me." His ethnographic description of the Tupinamba reflects a temperament different from that of Columbus. Although silver, gold, and exotic parrots remain essential to the discourse of discovery mobilized in Vaz de Caminha's account, he is more frank about the nature of the Native people's curiosity. They came to the cross the crew erected, he explains, "more to see the iron tools . . . than to see the cross" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 33, 34). He is also circumspect in attributing absolute value to the Portuguese contingent's interpretation of the events surrounding their landfall. "We interpreted it thus," Vaz de Caminha flatly reports, "because we wished it to be so."

If Vaz de Caminha's and Columbus' letters differ, however, it is more in degree than in overall shape and substance. Letters from the New World directed to a European sovereign would follow this model for the next century. The epistolary subject abases himself before the monarch, asserts the monarch's sovereign right to the land explored, and then reports on the riches of the country, the pliability of the inhabitants, the navigability of the harbors, and the progress of Christianity, embellishing to greater or lesser degree depending upon temperament and political context. Among the Spanish conquistadors, *cartas de relación* were required by law, and although they were often little more than lists of exploits, they firmly established the central role of epistolary reporting in furthering the European empires of the New World (see Echevarría 1998). Letters from the New World to the metropolitan leadership changed little from 1500 to 1700. Take, for example, the letter Father Louis Hennepin appends to his 1683 book *Description of Louisiana*. Addressed directly to Louis XIV, Hennepin's letter begins in obeisance, claiming the book never would have seen the light of day "if it had not been undertaken by . . . so glorious a Monarch" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 182). Hennepin goes so far as to claim that the Native people of the region pay homage to the king every time they smoke.

"Tchendiouba Louis," they say, "Smoke O Sun." According to Hennepin's report, "your Majesty's name is every moment on their lips." Like Columbus' captive heralds, the Natives of New Orleans mouth the praises of the conquesting culture.

Perhaps the most striking examples of this genre are the letters of Hernán Cortés. Cortés undertook his famous series of letters to King Charles V out of desperate political necessity. In order to authorize his illicit foray onto the Mexican mainland in 1520, Cortés and his men ingeniously set themselves up as a separate municipality, called "Villa Rica de Veracruz," in contradistinction to the royally recognized government in Cuba. Using a loophole in Spanish law, they then elected Cortés their leader. The effect of this "brilliant legalistic maneuver" was, as J. H. Elliot explains, "to free Cortes from his obligations to his immediate superior, Velazquez, and make him directly dependent upon the King." Cortés then elevated the *carta de relación* into a powerful political tool in the arsenal of the New Spanish elite who wished to circumvent local authority by appealing directly to the Crown. Elliot argues that Cortés' letters from Mexico during the period of the conquest of Tenochtitlan should not be "read as an accurate historical narrative but as a brilliant piece of special pleading, designed to justify an act of rebellion and to press the claim of Cortés against those of the governor of Cuba" (Elliot 1986: xx). The Cortés letters are thus marked by the "suppression of evidence and ingenious distortion," and weave a narrative of Mexico conducive to royal, rather than local, interest. By his "Segunda Carta" of 1520, Cortés employs frankly "imperial" rhetoric, likening his conquest of Mexico to Charles' own triumphs in Germany, and arguing that Mexico represents a second empire across the Atlantic.

Throughout his *relaciónes*, Cortés manipulates the intangible qualities of letter writing, moving beyond content to capitalize on the way a transatlantic missive might buy time for faraway (and unauthorized) actions in the New World. Cortés also employs letters as go-betweens to stand in for him when summoned by royal authority, diffusing the personal peril of their writer. Cortés further uses letters to fabricate a personal relationship with the sovereign where none existed. By writing directly to the king, Cortés exploited the epistle's ability to "bypass all intermediaries standing between ordinary public opinion and decision makers" (Boreau 1997: 24–5). He also shrewdly – and alone among his fellow conquistadors – had two complete scribal copies made of all his letters, thus ensuring that letters sent by court messenger to the king would be printed in public and thus enter the burgeoning public sphere, insulating him, and guaranteeing his posterity in the written history of New Spain. By October of 1522, mostly due to his calculated manipulation of transatlantic epistolary networks, Cortés was named Captain General of New Spain.

Transatlantic letters also underwrote the administration of New World empire for New England and New Netherland. And like their Iberian counterparts, the Dutch and the English found letters to be, at best, an ambiguous mode of colonial governance. The early years of English colonization in North America are punctuated by letters that functioned as go-betweens both across the physical distance of the

Atlantic and the ideological divide separating competing motives for colonization. Philip Barbour points out in his authoritative edition of John Smith's works that Smith's "*True Relation* (1608) bears evidence of being a letter designed to tell a friend or backer what happed to *him* from the time he sailed until the day he dispatched it to England" (Smith 1986: lxiv). Other kinds of epistles – like letters from the Virginia Company or religious pilgrims – struck Smith as "tedious." The never-ending transatlantic flow of "Letters, directions, and instructions" simply confirmed the cultural and experiential gulf that separated colonials and metropolitans, stuffed as they were with "strange absurdities and impossibilities . . . contrary to that was fitting" (ibid: 203).

Nor was Smith's experience unique. The letters exchanged between the Dutch West Indian Company and Peter Stuyvesant in New Netherland expose similar tensions between Old and New World expectations, and the impossibility of running a mercantile empire through epistolary administration alone. The Company repeatedly expresses its "astonishment" at receiving transatlantic news of actions that the governor has taken directly contrary to its wishes. Pleading for "caution and moderation," it asks Stuyvesant to keep their epistolary instructions secret. But transatlantic letters, it seems, had a way of getting loose. As property disputes and criminal actions began to leak from official transatlantic missives into the Dutch continental public sphere, the Company's officers warn Stuyvesant that "we must acknowledge that letters of exchange gone to protest do not add to the Company's reputation." Always at work in transatlantic epistolary circuits were "disruptive souls . . . trying to convince the community that these letters were not conceived by the entire board, but only by some of individual directors" (Gehring 2000: 72, 144).

Among the colonists at Massachusetts Bay, the situation was little different, if articulated in the language of Reformed Protestantism rather than that of corporate mercantilism. Like the Dutch West India Company's colonies, the Bay Colony was founded by a corporate body, the Massachusetts Bay Company, which believed that continual letters of instruction to the settlers would "put life into [their] affairs" (Young 1846: 141). Although the Company tried to assert its authority through "the power granted us by his Majesty's letters patent," their letters often fell on deaf ears. All of the culturally divisive moments in the Bay Colony's affairs (the Antinomian Crisis, the Pequot War, King Philip's War) were subsequently aired in transatlantic epistles that accentuated the difference between metropolitan instructions and the colonists' actions. The same is true of the Plymouth Colony, where William Bradford interleaved transatlantic letters with his narrative in *Of Plymouth Plantation* to provide readers with a visceral experience of the material and cultural "cost" of the Plymouth pilgrimage. Writing with the perspicuity of hindsight in the 1640s, Bradford was merely acknowledging what Bay Colony, New Netherland, Spanish, and Portuguese emigrants had discovered not long after settling in the New World – that their self-fashioning would be largely accomplished within the sacred and secular, public and private discursive spaces framed by the pages of transatlantic letters.

Sacred Writ

Transatlantic letters of spiritual fulfillment exploited a "network of communications, not unlike [those of] the mercantile organizations . . . [where] family ties were an important constituent element" (Lockhart and Otte 1976: 114). For Protestants and Catholics alike, the New World experience reproduced a context for letter writing that was typologically parallel to the Pauline epistolary tradition. From the perspective of seventeenth-century English Puritans, the early history of New England looked like the history of the Pauline epistle writ large. "A letter from New England then, and for a good time after," Joshua Scottow recalled, "was Venerated as a Sacred Script, or as the Writing of some Holy Prophet, 'twas carried many miles, where divers came to hear it" (Round 1999: 28). For Puritans in New England and Old, the transatlantic exchange of letters between "God's people" promised to extend the metropolitan discursive network that was beginning to unite Puritans into a formidable political community all across England.

Transatlantic letters served a similar function among the Catholics of New Spain and New France. The letters of an Ursuline nun, Marie de l'Incarnation (Marie Guyart Martin, 1599–1672), who lived in Quebec from 1639 to 1672, reflect the intricate bonds of kinship, doctrine, and piety that were woven into transatlantic spiritual epistolarity. Marie de l'Incarnation came to New France from Tours, a recent widow who had had a vision ordering her to the New World to save "heathen" souls. Her transatlantic salutations and leave takings, in letters to ecclesiastical superiors, aristocratic patrons, and the son she abandoned when she took her vows, always seek to preserve the ties of faith that had bound writer and reader together in the Old World. "Let us dwell together in Christ," her many letters to her son begin, and close, "join your prayers to ours." For Marie, "letter writing became a means for carrying on mutual spiritual direction" (Zecher 1996: 94).

In their capacity as spiritual go-betweens, however, Marie's letters move beyond simply reaffirming ties of faith between the Old and New Worlds to embody the sacrifices of the New World martyrs. In one particularly vivid letter, she describes cleaning up after an Indian "massacre" and seeing a Frenchman carrying body parts – a trunk, several legs, and arms – of his fellow villagers back into the settlement for identification. As their sacrifices are written on the villagers' corpses, so Marie's letters reinscribe these sacrifices onto the bodies of letters sent home to France.

Marie was not to find the martyrdom she herself sought, and the dominant theme that emerges from her 32 years of transatlantic letters is the historical contingency of life in the New World. Her thin epistolary tether to the Old World actually seems to exacerbate her anxieties. To one correspondent, she writes, "I am merely entrusting this letter to chance"; to another, she confesses, "your arguments seem very good to me and I find them very much in agreement with those I often have myself – though with tranquility. But the way God governs this country is quite contrary to them." The New World is redolent with baleful portents, canoes seen burning in the sky after

dark, and a broken social order in which "it is impossible to make the captain obey although he has been ordered in the name of the King to come to Quebec." In short, she remarks, "this country subsists . . . only with the support of His divine providence" (Marshall 1967: 181, 205, 217, 275). Marie's letters embody God's providence, chart it, and carry it across the Atlantic where it might be witnessed by a fallen European world that has seemingly lost its sense of contingency and wonder.

Epistolary Resistance

Transatlantic letters played constitutive roles not only in the lives of Europeans, but also in the strategies of resistance employed by indigenous peoples. Native people were indispensable in the organization of European New World settlements, in the warfare that made those settlements possible, and in the economic systems that sustained them. They were also essential to mediating communications between the metropolis and periphery. Marie de l'Incarnation notes in passing the central role played by Iroquois people in the communications system of New France: "As soon as the Iroquois . . . had arrived in his own country, he had sought out Couture [Guillaume Couture, a "donné" who served the mission] and given him the letter with which he had been entrusted, and they then went together to the principal men of the nation and gave them an account of their commissions, both spoken and written" (Marshall 1967: 138).

Although Marie de l'Lincarnation would report that the Iroquois people in her region "held it a miracle to see her read and write, a thing they had never yet seen in one of their own people" (ibid: 109), in other parts of the Americas, indigenous elites had employed writing systems for several centuries before the arrival of Europeans, and many of them later adapted these to European alphabets in order to pursue hybrid forms of literacy during European colonization. The relationship of the majority of Native people in the New World to European alphabetic literacy can best be described as "non-literate," a term the anthropologist Sarah Lund has employed to "emphasize the acoustic character of successful oral communication," rather than "the negative image of failed communication in a medium not mastered" (Lund 1997: 195). It is important to recall, in this context, that even among the French nobility during the period of American colonization, epistolary communication "resonates with the formulaic and repetitive construction typical of orally based compositions." Nobles were "accustomed to face-to-face communication, and the language with which they perceived and expressed their knowledge of the world was still largely an oral one" (Neuschel 1989: 103). Thus indigenous orality or "non-literacy" was not the wholly alien thing that writers like Marie de l'Incarnation sometimes made it out to be.

Martin Leinhard has outlined how the epistolary form came to be the primary mode of written communication adapted by indigenous peoples across the Americas. When Europeans began to exercise political control over many parts of the

New World, "they created the need for a new, intercultural type of communication between the groups who were marginalized by the conquest and the new masters." Within such epistolary circuits, Leinhard argues, "outsiders took on a role as part of a communicative system the basis of which was fixed in the sixteenth century: an asymmetrical system, dominated by the figure of the Spanish king" (Leinhard 1997: 172).

Transatlantic epistles produced by indigenous elites within these discursive circuits, from the sixteenth through the eighteenth century, do indeed demonstrate the "asymmetry" of the system. At the same time, they interleave traditional, pre-contact practices with the "modern," virtual communication gestures that were common in the transatlantic letters of European colonists. In their 1560 letter to King Philip of Spain, for example, the Indian city councilors of Huejotzingo, Mexico, retain "stylistic devices and vocabulary" from pre-contact times: "Our lord, you the king don Felipe our lord, we bow low in great reverence to your high dignity... very high and feared king through omnipotent God, giver of life." The letter continues in this style, each paragraph "introduced by the [Nahuatl] invocations *totecuiyoe tolatocatzine* ('O our lord, O our king')." These indigenous rhetorical practices are intertwined with another set of epistolary gestures that attempt to bridge the great physical divide separating native writers from the person of the Spanish king. "O, unfortunate are we," the councilors write, "very great and heavy sadness and affliction lie upon us. Your pity and compassion do not reach us" (Lockhart and Otte 1976: 165, 163, 166). In early modern European monarchies, "the nation is not a separate body but resides entirely in the person of the king" (Melzer and Norberg 1998: 3), and letters were often sent to embody this authority. Indigenous writers, seeking to tap into a similar power of epistolary embodiment, sought to close the distance between themselves and the metropolis by embodying their political selves in the leaves of a transatlantic letter. Because "we did not reach you, we were not given audience before you," the Aztec elites lament, "who then will speak for us?" (Lockhart and Otte 1976: 170). The answer – for indigenous people throughout the early modern period – was "the letter."

This practice of epistolary embodiment reappears in the 1688 letter from the Apalachee leaders of the San Luis Mission community in La Florida to the Spanish ruler, Charles II. Having suffered much at the hands of one royal governor, the Apalachee leadership was encouraged by his replacement, Diego de Quiroga y Losada, to set out their grievances in a letter written in their own language. The only document in Apalachee to date, this letter encodes the technologies of embodiment that both the indigenous peoples of the Americas and their European counterparts recognized as viable in transatlantic epistolary exchange. After assuring the king of their faithfulness and willingness to serve as Christian subjects, they voice the concerns of virtual subjects from all walks of life and from within all early modern European New World empires:

> So we and all these your wretched vassals are maintained and live through your noble and great word. And although we do not see them bodily with our eyes, we see the one

> who occupies your place, that is to say (your lieutenant), who is the one whom we call governor . . . And we look to this one as to the one who is in your place. And we hear and understand and cherish and keep his word as your very own word, believing it and obeying it.

The letter concludes with an extended leave-taking that performs the obedience and vassalage intoned in the body of the missive: "we wrap our hearts around your feet." As they beg the sovereign's forgiveness, they also pointedly direct his attention to the physical object before him: "This is as far as this goes. Look at it and understand it" (Hann and McEwan 1998: 156–8).

Within the general discursive space carved out by such transatlantic indigenous letters, there emerged what Leinhard calls an " 'autonomous' literary genre of unexpected dimensions" (Leinhard 1997: 176). Citing the 66 epistolary folios of the Inka Titu Cusi Yupanqui, writing in 1570 to Philip III of Spain and "the vast letter-chronicle (1,189 folios)" of Guaman Poma de Ayala (1611), Leinhard argues that indigenous resistance discourse both frees itself from "the conventions of the epistolary traditions," while employing the mode to embody its politics. The mediative power of the epistle is especially evident in the conclusion of Poma de Ayala's *Letter to a King* (1613), where the *mestizo* narrator engages in an imaginary dialogue with Phillip II concerning the "true state of affairs in Peru." To the narrator's mind, the imaginary dialogue is best performed within the epistolary format: "We can communicate with one another by letter, with Your majesty asking for information and myself replying" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 128). Regretting that he cannot address the king "face to face," Poma de Ayala proceeds to construct an imaginary set of epistles that frame native knowledge and native discourse in the new cultural setting of "coloniality" as a function of royal interrogation and local response.

Gendered Epistles

Of all the forms of early modern transatlantic letters, women's epistles offer perhaps the most salient indices of the structural and historical transformation in European subjectivities entailed in New World colonization. As "conversational" texts consumed with the everyday, women's letters are especially valuable sites for locating "the different forms of women's power and influence within the family, locality and occasionally within a wider political scene" (Daybell 2001: 13). Women's letters sent across the Atlantic underscore the gendered nature of the epistolary "go-between." They served not only as "messengers" that mediated orality and literacy, the public and private, but also as a discourse of gender difference whose Old World antinomies of work and leisure, masculine and feminine, were challenged by New World circumstances. Women's experiences in the colonies exacerbated the "category crisis" that many feminist historians see at work in the *querelle des femmes* debates that

dominated discussion of sex roles throughout the early modern period (Merrim 1999: xi–xliv) and their transatlantic epistles often expose a heightened awareness of the widening social and sexual divide inculcated by life in the New World.

While fewer transatlantic women's letters survive than men's, it is clear from the ancillary evidence that colonial women often positioned their utterances in an epistolary mode, even if they did not post them on an ocean-going ship. Such is the case in Anne Bradstreet's many verse epistles to her husband. Bradstreet penned private verse "In Thankful Acknowledgement for the Letters I Received from My Husband out of England." Calling herself his "loving love and dearest dear," Bradstreet sought out an epistolary mode for her lyric poetry that could range "home, abroad, and everywhere" (Bradstreet 1967: 230). The feeling of being adrift and in need of an epistolary tether to friends and family remained a central fact of colonial women's lives nearly one hundred years later, when Elisabeth Begon of New France (1696–1755) wrote to her son-in-law: "What are you doing dear son, and where are you? This is what I do not know, nor shall I know any times soon, which gives me great pain. Adieu" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 403).

Many colonial women in the Americas found themselves in similar positions, managing personal and family relations at great distances, without the assistance of men. The letters of such women show them "participating in a masculine world of information exchange beyond the household and family, rather than the kind of personal communication that is often taken to characterize women's letters" (Laurence 2001:195). In an early modern world where demands for preferment and reward were strictly gendered, colonial women often found themselves thrust into traditionally masculine roles. Witness, for example, this 1556 letter from Doña Isabel de Guevara, in Asunción, Paraguay, to the Princess Dona Juana, regent in Spain:

> Very high and powerful lady . . . On reaching the port of Buenos Aires, our expedition contained 1,500 men, but food was scarce and hunger was such that within three months, 1,000 of them died . . . The men became so weak that all the tasks fell on the poor women, washing the clothes as well as nursing the men, preparing the little food there was, keeping them clean, standing guard, patrolling the fires, loading the crossbows when the Indians came sometimes to do battle, even firing the cannon and arousing the soldiers who were capable of fighting. (Lockhart and Otte 1976: 15–16)

Doña Isabel says she writes so that "her Highness will readily believe that our contributions were such that if it had not been for us, all would have perished." As in so many transatlantic letters, believability is the key issue, but with one important difference. Writing as a woman, Doña Isabel's subject position is subordinated (rhetorically, at least) to men: "were it not for the men's reputation, I could truthfully write you much more and given them as the witnesses." Despite its rhetorical subordination, however, Doña Isabel's letter manages to remain a frankly practical text, as forthright and practical as any conquistador's, pointing out how "ungratefully" she has "been treated in this land" and asking for preferment.

The situation was even more difficult, however, when a colonial woman had cause to address her epistle to a man in the public sphere. Such is the case of the letters of Maria Van Rensselaer (1645–89?) of New Netherland, whose transatlantic correspondence came about as a result of the death of her husband, the director of the colony of Rensselaerswyck. Burdened with the responsibility of carrying on business until a suitable male replacement could be found, Maria Van Rensselaer discovered that crafty men indebted to her husband were trying to take advantage of her because she was a woman. Fighting back, she complained to male relatives back home, "I told [them] . . . I would await your answer before I would pay one stiver" (Van Rensselaer 1935: 51). Admitting that she could not stand "Braggarts and pompous men," Maria Van Rensselaer took advantage of the time and distance involved in transatlantic epistolary negotiations to hold them at bay. Even her brother was shocked by her epistolary toughness. Commenting on his sister's resistance to his plans for her husband's estate, Richard Van Rensselaer remarked, "instead of thanking me for brotherly advice, [she] sent me a very sharp answer" (ibid: 160).

Epistolary embodiment was particularly difficult for women like Maria Van Rensslaer because they were forced to act in a masculine, public space. This exposure was multiplied if the letter appeared in print. While many men's transatlantic letters were written strategically, with print in mind (as was the case with Cortés' *cartas*), similar letters written by women met with outrage. The career of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's (1651–95) *Carta Atenagórica* (1690) shows how epistolary ground rules for women were far more rigid. Replying to Sor Juana's religious tract, written in an epistolary mode, the bishop of Puebla points out that by publishing her letter, he is in effect punishing her by submitting her to the discipline of the scribal economy. The bishop tells Sor Juana: "I have printed it, . . . so that you may read yourself in clearer lettering" (La Cruz 1988: 199). In a traditional patriarchal attack on women's learning, the bishop further remarks: "Letters that breed arrogance God does not want in women." Letters were fine, the bishop chided, as long as they did "not remove women from a position of obedience." The discursive shelter letters provided for men (a space of "conversation," informality, and speculation) often proved to be a house of cards for women. The same Pauline tradition that exalted letters also admonished women to "keep silent" (1 Corinthians 14: 34). Even in the relative privacy of letters, women found their utterances under surveillance. Thus, like other transatlantic letters we have examined, women's stress embodiment and the continuity of social order. The female body and the women's role in the early modern social order, however, did not easily lend themselves to what Erasmus termed "a mutual conversation between absent friends . . . neither unpolished, rough, or artificial, nor confined to a single topic."

Epistolary Revolution

By the first decades of the eighteenth century, epistolarity had become so constitutive of bourgeois identity that Jürgen Habermas dubbed that period of European history

"the century of the letter." Through epistolary discourse, Habermas maintains, the bourgeois individual "unfolded himself in his subjectivity" (Habermas 1991: 48). This "unfolding" of subjectivity coincided with an explosion in the production of letter writing manuals and the establishment of "literary" epistolary collections. These, in turn, gave birth to a "specialized literature . . . whose aim it was to regulate and control ordinary forms of writing." Against the Renaissance humanists' insistence on brevity and clarity, eighteenth-century letter writing manuals emphasize propriety, regulating "the terms of epistolary exchange according to a precise perception of the positions occupied by the people involved in a given correspondence" (Chartier 1997: 1, 75).

Such demands for propriety extended into the activities of bourgeois social revolutionaries. Even the American Revolution, harbinger of future creole revolutions in Mexico and Latin America, found respectability in letters. John Dickinson politely expressed his outrage at British colonial policy in the *Letters from a Farmer in Philadelphia* (1768). Benjamin Franklin framed his life story as a Chesterfieldian letter to his son posted from Twyford, England, even as its implicit purpose was to explain "that adversion to arbitrary power that has stuck to me my whole life" (Franklin 1958: 17). J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur's *Letters from an America Farmer* (1782, 1783), which was published in London, reflects its author's attempt to use epistolarity to mediate his own divided loyalties during his time of exile from the American colonies. Even the Declaration of Independence, with its salutation, leave-taking, and signatories, poses as a "candid" letter to Europe.

For indigenous peoples across the Americas, the creole revolutions of independence created a situation in which "epistolary relations . . . ceased to be carried out within a stable framework." (Leinhard 1997:173). "In this qualitatively different situation," Martin Leinhard argues, "Indian-led letter writing definitively abandoned its vertical relationship with the supreme authority and began to move in all sorts of horizontal directions" (Leinhard 1997: 173). In British North America, the letters exchanged between Eleazar Wheelock, the Protestant missionary founder of Moor's Charity School for Indians, and his Algonquian students epitomize the shifting power dynamics at work in eighteenth-century indigenous epistolarity. During the 1750s, Wheelock printed many of his students' letters under the auspices of several metropolitan missionary groups – the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the Society in Scotland for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, among others – in order to raise money for his mission. In their metropolitan print manifestations, Wheelock's Indian letters functioned much the same way as Columbus' Indian heralds had in 1493. Through a skillful manipulation of Native voices, Wheelock produced a body of Indian epistles that seemed to repeat the motto of the Massachusetts Bay Colony Seal, which depicted a Native American calling to Europe, "Come over and help us" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 245).

However, as Laura J. Murray explains, Wheelock's Indian correspondents "still maintained circles in which they could speak and act outside of his knowledge or control." Murray shows how the letters of one convert, David Fowler, actually shuttle

between "complex emotion or negotiation and formulaic obedience" (Murray 1996: 20, 21). Thus, Murray exposes how eighteenth-century North American Indian epistolarity reflects the "horizontal" movement and chaos that Leinhard describes for Latin America in the same period.

For African Americans in the eighteenth century, letter writing was also focused on power and symbolic violence. Letter writing by slaves is perhaps the least common form of early American epistolarity, but the letters of Phyllis Wheatley to her fellow slave and friend in Connecticut, Arbor Tanner, and her transatlantic letters to the Countess of Huntington and Lord Dartmouth, reveal the rhetorical complexities involved in African American epistolarity. For a slave, a woman, and a colonial subject, Wheatley's letters are surprisingly forthright, and although she executes many gestures of obeisance (calling herself an "untutor'd African"), she performs them within the overarching eighteenth-century bourgeois social context of letter writing as sociability. Her salutation to Lord Dartmouth is especially interesting for the way it mobilizes the sociability and conversationality of the eighteenth-century familiar letter in the service of a subjectivity that both defers to the metropolitan aristocrat and embodies the disembodied slave. Wheatley salutes Dartmouth in the guise of "an African who with the now happy America exults with equal transport in the view of one of its greatest advocates presiding with special tenderness of a Fatherly heart" over American colonial affairs (Wheatley 1988: 166). Linking her subject position with that of a dependent colony seeking freedom, Wheatley shrewdly employs the mediating power of the transatlantic epistle, that had since 1493 mobilized both signs of obeisance and the "illusion of unbounded communication" (Boreau 1997: 24), to break free of her marginal identity.

Perhaps the most important piece of writing in any colonial free black American's life was a letter. In *The Interesting Narrative* (1791), Olaudah Equiano prints in full the letter of manumission penned by his former master, Robert King. King's letter circulates around the Atlantic world along with Equiano, thereby "giving, granting, and releasing unto him . . . all right, title, dominion, sovereignty, and property" over himself. As a result of this transatlantic epistle, Equiano observes, "the fair as well as the black people immediately styled me by a new appellation . . . which was freeman" (Equiano 1995: 120). In a related way, the transatlantic letters of Toussaint L'Overture to the French Directory were posted across the Atlantic as a method of political embodiment at a distance – "in order to justify," L'Overture explains, "in your eyes and in the eyes of my fellow citizens" the actions of a revolutionary and freeman (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 541).

From the first transatlantic American letter of 1493 to Olaudah Equiano's eighteenth-century letter of manumission, epistolarity in the Atlantic world involved a series of discursive negotiations that signaled early on the "proto-creole" identities of many Europeans in the New World. Despite assertions that they remain members of the religious and secular communities they had left behind, their letters often betray them as a different people, a people of contingency, distance, and change. Although New Spain's *cartas de relación* and New England and New Netherland's letters of

instruction were instituted as modes of imperial administrative control, the familiarity of letters – their "go-between" nature, secrecy, publicity, and conversationality – opened spaces for transgressive behaviors and alternate subject positions that exceeded the grasp of even the most hegemonic states. Pious letters of New World missionaries struggled hard to maintain orthodox acceptance of providence while constantly acknowledging the contingency of things in the New World. The interior spaces of a transatlantic missive might perfectly encapsulate the inner reaches of the Christian heart, but in the wrong hands and under trying circumstances, they might just as often spur sectarian controversy, doubt, and dread. Colonial women, whose social relation to writing was always already suspect, found themselves in the double bind of being by necessity tied to writing when they tried to maintain the familial and religious bonds that were commonly accepted as the proper sites for performing gender difference.

For Native peoples in the Americas, letters became a fundamental mode of discursive resistance and cultural revitalization. Alphabetically literate indigenous scribes and writers exploited the transatlantic letter's status as messenger to attach themselves to the imperial body politic that sought to forcible remove them from their homelands or to strip them of communal membership. To Africans, whether slaves or freemen, finding their way in the early modern "Black Atlantic" meant navigating discourses of legality and sociability that inevitably turned on the epistolary mode and its central negotiating role in manumission and patronage. Thus, at the social margins of the Atlantic world, the letter was an appropriately "marginal" mode of discourse, mediating from the borders of empires, embodying the disembodied subject in such a way as to "bypass all intermediaries standing between ordinary public opinion and decision makers" (Boureau 1997: 24–5).

Although some scholars have seen transatlantic letters primarily as harbingers of the novel – their episodic nature prefiguring fictional narratives of national identity (e.g., Armstrong and Tennenhouse 1992) – reading early America through its epistles offers an instructive contrast to studies that focus on the Americas of books and printed codices. "The difference between a book and a letter," Erasmus wrote, "is that the latter must be adapted as far as possible to the immediate occasion, whereas a book is for general consumption" (Erasmus 1978: 14). An epistolary history of the Americas reveals a place of "immediate occasions" and human colonial subjects who imagined themselves as "emissaries" and "go-betweens."

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26

True Relations and Critical Fictions: The Case of the Personal Narrative in Colonial American Literatures

Kathleen Donegan

For most of its history, writing from colonial America did not qualify as literature. Keepers of the literary gate shunned colonial relations as unrefined, ideological, provincial, commercial, or all of the above. Vivid chronicles of personal experience rarely even made it through literature's back door of autobiography. *A Bibliography of American Autobiography*, for example, explicitly excludes captivity narratives, slave narratives, travel and exploration narratives, personal reminiscences, diaries, journals, and all "episodic" accounts – materials that comprise a basic catalogue of colonial forms (Kaplan 1962). Clearly, in order for colonial writings to be recognized as literature, a case needed to be made for them. This essay explores some of those cases, theoretical and practical, that have sought to establish the significance of this literature. In our own critical era, personal narratives have become a standard element of the early American curriculum, as scholars reimagine the contexts of and contests for colonial self-representation. However, even as the questions we bring to first-person narratives change, traditional methods of critique continue to obscure possible meanings from view. Potential relations *between* texts remain unarticulated because of the critical categories we use to define them. Perhaps, then, a new poetics is called for – one that allows us to illuminate those relations by providing a way to read across the critical boundaries that regulate the textual fields of colonial experience. Recognizing that any analysis is implicitly an argument, the last part of this essay attempts such a poetics, purposely using the language of "the case" to consider the positions in which colonials could find themselves as subjects, and the positions they could in turn assume as they composed true stories from their lives.

True Relations

How did the personal narrative, long considered a supplementary source of evidence, become a genre of preference for so many scholars today? For even as colonial poems, treatises, sermons, and histories stay on the shelves, our questions and our hands together reach for colonists' journals, letters, true relations – first-person accounts by people who might have remained anonymous but for this signature they left behind. One way to explain this shift is to trace the growth of critical interest in autobiography and memoir in general. Compiling a collection of critical essays from the rising field in 1980, James Olney asked: "Why was it not proper to produce literary studies of autobiography 25 years ago? Why is nothing else as proper, as vital today?" (Olney 1980: 8). Olney proposed that during those ensuing years, two separate intellectual pursuits – the search for the origins of a modern, self-conscious self, and the search for first-person testimony from marginalized populations – converged, creating a groundswell of scholarship that focused on autobiographical acts and meditated on their distinctiveness as sites of literary analysis. According to Olney, this production of autobiographical studies expressed a deeply felt cultural fascination with and anxiety about the self. Critics were able to bring pressing social, psychological, historical, and philosophical concerns about the self into the realm of literary study through the vehicle of life-writing.

The introduction of poststructuralist thought, which in the early 1980s was beginning to assert a steady influence on literary analysis, both complicated and corroborated the case for life-writing. As the writings of Derrida, Barthes, Lacan, Foucault, Kristeva, and others were translated into the American academy, they in effect asserted that this entity named "the self" – the object of so much recent literary meditation – was itself a textual manifestation, always already a fiction, and thus an even more complex object of philosophical analysis. As the 1990s began, poststructuralist thinking about the nature of the self and its relation to textual representation was refracted through the work of postcolonial scholars, who analyzed the contested construction of selves in the specific times, places, and literary cultures of colonialism. "Identity" became an operative concept, while "the Self" (in all its fictions, its politics, its institutions, and its histories) was seen to have an implicit partner: "the Other." Life-writings from the colonial arena now had an additional import, as theorists like Homi Bhaba, historians like Nicholas Canny, and literary practitioners like Steven Greenblatt made an especially strong case for the significance of intercultural exchange in colonial literatures, and in the process introduced new vocabulary, arguments, and examples to enormously energized field of study.

Scholars working in colonial studies today have thus brought a general interest in first-person writing into critical focus by thinking theoretically, and historically, about how various colonial contexts structured textual acts of self-creation. In our own cultural moment, it is no longer controversial to talk about the fictionalization of the self, the politicization of the personal, the invention of the psychological, or

even the mass-merchandising of the memoir form. However, to read critically among the writing practices gathered under the genre of personal narratives, we must continue to resist the assumption that the colonial world was a proving ground for modern selves. Scholars are sophisticated regarding different models of identity and their internal differences, narrative constructions, and cultural reproduction – but part of what fuels the study of these first-person texts remains a search for genuine testimony. Reading between the lines, we still want these voices to tell us what it was like to be colonial. This desire, persistent despite being continually challenged, may be silently supported by a much older scholarly tradition.

The fact is that personal narratives have always held a special position in the case for studying colonial texts. While life-writing did not merit attention in other literary traditions, the earliest scholars of colonial America made their winning argument for the study of these texts by employing a metonymic line of reasoning: colonial literature gained value precisely by standing in for colonial lives. The colonial experiment itself was the real object of inquiry, and colonial writing, by its very lack of artistic embellishment, provided an especially direct and unmediated "true relation" of those important lives and times. In 1878, Moses Coit Tyler used this tactic as he opened the halls of American literature to the colonial archive. He handled the vexing question of aesthetic value by changing the paradigm, and boldly asserting that colonial literature never aimed to be belletristic. "They wrote books not because they cared to write books," he declared, "but because by writing books they could accomplish certain other things which they did care for." And what did they care for? Tyler's answer was plain, assured, and above all humane. "Their earliest motive for writing books," he wrote, "was bound up in a natural and even pathetic desire to send back news of themselves to the old world" (Tyler 1878: 8). News of themselves – as a motive for writing, no goal could seem more reasonable, or immediate. Regardless of its other functions, each book acted as a missive from the New World to the Old. Colonial narratives were, perforce, personal. Poignantly, naturally, even somewhat pathetically, the case for being colonial could not help but be distinctively autobiographical.

It is possible to pursue the implications of Tyler's deep-rooted and persuasive claim – that colonial writers wrote because they needed to represent what was happening to them – without his faith in the transparency of that desire. The news colonial writers gave of themselves was indeed shaped by testimonial imperatives, but those imperatives were neither uniform nor obvious. As recent scholarship has shown, colonial settings were not empty frontiers to be inscribed, but complex borderlands to be negotiated. Personal narratives proved to be especially effective sites for recording such negotiations. To understand what colonials wrote about their lives, and why colonial writing in general has such a powerful testimonial strain, we must work toward a more expansive understanding of the personal narrative form: learning how to read evidence of colonial lives without treating the narratives themselves as self-evident. While engaging theories of colonial identity, we as scholars still take up these texts with a critical inheritance to work through, and practical questions to resolve.

Critical Fictions

Of the many assumptions, or critical fictions, that guide our interpretations of colonial personal narratives, three have been particularly influential. The first of these concerns genre, and classifies subcategories within the field. It defines texts by narrative form and subject matter, and seeks conformity to type. The second critical fiction demarcates historical periods. It plots broad timelines across geographic space, and posits that writers in the same era shared a horizon of ideas, expectations, and cultural practices. The third fiction carries the weight of ideology. It reaches back to colonial texts to find the origins of our national "selves." Each of these critical fictions protects us from the messy pluralism of colonial personal narratives as we find them but, as we shall see, each does so at a cost.

Genre classification

To describe the genre of "personal narrative" in colonial literatures, one frequently recites a catalogue of forms: explorers' reports, travel narratives, eyewitness histories, captivity narratives, spiritual autobiographies, confessions, conversion narratives, slave narratives, shipwreck narratives, journals, diaries, open letters, and so on. Although this capaciousness is a hallmark of the genre, it can also be problematic. If every description of life experience can be considered an exercise in "life-writing," then one might ask: what is *not* a personal narrative? Organizing the range of documents classified as "personal narratives" has proven an important task because it allows literary critics to pursue common analytical themes. However, while genre classification helps us to understand particular modes of writing, it also constrains our ability to read creatively across this body of texts.

The benefits of mapping formal boundaries are many: to establish when and where various genres emerged most visibly; to analyze whose voices spoke through which forms; to examine how first-person modes of writing overlapped and interacted with each other. Genre studies provide a particularly useful lens for seeing how race, class, and gender operated within, and often against, the dictates of literary form. For example, the pervasiveness of religious discourse made spiritual autobiography a widespread mode of self-account, one that was at once highly formalized and also flexible enough to shape diverse experiences into representative narratives. Entering a realm in which one's personal story was considered instructive to others, a broad range of testifiers could use the powerful language of redemption to address audiences in ways that were both reflective and distinctive of their social roles. Structures that codified colonial spiritual autobiography could give Protestant women a moral authority and public platform not available to them in secular arenas. Christianized Africans could use these same narrative forms to claim their place as citizens of heaven, even as the status of their humanity was being debated on earth. Cloistered Catholic nuns could narratively unveil the dramatic humiliations, victories, and

passions of their souls. Convicted criminals could chart the wayward paths that brought them all at once to repentance, salvation, and the scaffold. Furthermore, oral and written forms interacted in complex ways, as people with varying access to the technologies of writing performed and narrated their confessions and conversions.

Thus, dividing the almost unmanageably large category of "personal narrative" into smaller generic components like "spiritual autobiography" allows us to see in finer detail how particular conventions shaped colonial self-representation across diverse populations. However, literary taxonomies are more than practical devices; they are also theoretical structures. Analyzing colonial narratives as forms can obscure the significance of first-person writing as a practice, especially when many texts are deemed awkward because of their generic indeterminacy. In other words, form can distract from function. What to make, for example, of a personal narrative that is part shipwreck story, part deliverance tale, part captivity narrative, part wonder story, part collective report, part ethnography, part travelogue, and part exemplary life? The archive is full of them. For a long time, such generic bricolage was exactly what disqualified colonial literature *as* literature. It was neither one thing nor another; it seemed not to follow any rules; the forms simply did not cohere. However, as the methods of reading outlined below show, the generic hybridity of these texts is no liability to literary analysis. It can be, rather, a key into their very coloniality.

If colonial writers transported a number of literary traditions from outside the colonial arena, they also transformed those traditions to meet the needs of the moment. Discourses, like everything else in the colonial world, were negotiated, improvised, and recombined to serve in novel situations. The constant slippage of forms in colonial writing reveals how representational strategies were cobbled together under pressure and duress, and the visible strain testifies to the relationship these literary strategies bore to the slipperiness of other forms of cultural power. This was never more the case than when issues of identity were at stake. Parsing the subgenres of personal narrative does more than downplay hybrid narratives; it also obscures the way various forms acted as cultural screens for each other.

For example, what happens when we put the genres of captivity narratives, early slave narratives, and migration narratives into conversation with one another? All narrated the decisively colonial theme of people and bodies being remade through unpredictable movement and radical environmental change. However, the huge popularity of Indian captivity narratives served not only to elide the violence done to Native Americans, but also to transmute the prevailing phenomenon of captivity taking place on the continent: the massive importation of African slaves. In turn, graphic descriptions of the middle passage in early slave narratives undoubtedly challenged the Christian symbolism of the wonders of the deep, but they also endorsed the conventions of shipboard transformation that gave Christian migration narratives such power and influence. And while migration narratives flouted the timidity of readers who stayed safely at home, captivity narratives worked tirelessly to reestablish boundaries that had been too promiscuously crossed. The language of spiritual pilgrimage informed all of these writings, but that spiritual discourse itself

borrowed from a crosscurrent of languages of kidnapping, ransom, conquest, exile, margins, and borders. In short, religious expression became saturated in the historical phenomena of colonialism. As a critical tool, then, formal classification has value, and is often a prerequisite for establishing the "literariness" of any text. As a critical fiction, however, formalism draws boundaries that restrict our ability to imagine the broadest colonial context and significance of these literatures.

European periodization

Another major route of analysis has aimed to align colonial writings with literary models in the imperial cultures of origin. The colonial literature we study is essentially a literature of displaced Europeans, it claims; moreover, the constant flow and back-migration of people, books, and ideas belies any radical separation between colony and mother country. Like formal classification, historical periodization is a practical device that carries theoretical significance. Put simply, traditional arguments have swung back and forth between a "continuities" school that posits a shared world of discourse and cultural meaning between imperial centers and colonial peripheries, and an "exceptionalist" school that claims American conditions were so profoundly new as to break European molds. Alternately holding sway, these arguments have acted as correctives to one another. By putting these critical mainstays into a dialectic relationship, however, it becomes clear that colonial personal narratives were produced neither as extensions of European cultural concerns nor sprung *sui generis* from American ground. Rather, they were born of and sustained by tensions *between* being European and being American – indeed, those tensions were inherent in the case for being colonial. When transcontinental readings allow for this articulation of differences among and within colonial texts, we find that historical periodization can demonstrate the wrinkling as well as the unfolding of time. Scholars working with the model of an Atlantic world reenvision shared eras of European time as intermingling axes of colonial space. They show how colonial texts actively shaped European discourses, and how cultural influence, like people and texts, continuously moved not only "back and forth," but also through and around many boundaries in a circum-atlantic world.

Even when the Old World seems to set the interpretive horizon, colonial manifestations are distinct. The case of "testimony" as a discourse is an especially pertinent example. Over the course of the early modern period, giving testimony became a self-conscious practice in Europe's religious, secular, and private arenas. In religious cultures, the deeply rooted forms of *apologia* and *exemplum* were newly deployed in the battle between institutional authority and spiritual autonomy during the second Reformation. Meanwhile, rising secular institutions like the law, natural sciences, medicine, and news culture increasingly employed observations of eyewitnesses to measure "matters of fact." Credibility became an important element of social status. Testimonial practices also had a role in private life. From the sixteenth century to the eighteenth century, memoirs grew more popular – less exclusively the domain of

public men and their public acts, and more often a window onto varied individual experiences and values. Thus, whether directed upward toward the mantle of the divine, outward toward the matters of the day, or inward as the mirror of the self, a number of early modern cultural practices linked truth-telling, first-person discourse, and extended narrative performance.

This emergent discourse of truth was crucial to the progress of colonialism. The structure of colonialism relied on an ongoing long-distance flow of information: true reports, eyewitness testimony, and detailed observation. From a European perspective, written accounts were central to every colonial project, whether travel and exploration, trade and commerce, or the establishment and maintenance of settlements. From a colonial perspective, the stakes were more pressing and more personal still, as discourses of fact became discourses of self. Colonial "true relations" were subject to blistering scrutiny and skepticism. The farther away from the metropolis colonials traveled, the more difficult it became to account for themselves in common and consistent forms. Essentially, survival outside European social structures changed notions of identity. This was not only the case during periods of first contact when writers had to assimilate the discovery of a New World – a new "there," a new "they." The big problems began when explorers became colonials, and thus had to incorporate a new "here," a new "we," a new "I." To acquire meaning for these other categories, colonial writers engaged in a constant battle of credibility with their European audiences.

Testimonial imperatives were not only dictated by changes in European cultures or by the structure of colonialism itself. They were also powerfully shaped by ongoing transformations on the ground. Colonial situations demanded that identity be articulated, or fortified, or modified, or translated, but in any case, that it be self-consciously reconstructed. In large part, this reflected the unsettled and unsettling nature of colonial lives – their distant remove from the governing apparatuses of European social order; their brutal, often futile, battles to control native civilizations, the radical exigency that defined so many of their choices. In this environment, some of the most crucial borders to regulate were the borders of a self that was growing increasingly liminal. For many colonials, writing, and especially life-writing, played an important though unpredictable role in this process. Recall Tyler's rather homey phrase: they gave news of themselves. But in the midst of declaring "what we are doing here," the terms could suddenly invert, and interrogate "what *are* we doing here?" Writing could start off as a factual report of "what happened," and end up as a persistent question: what *has* happened, and what has happened to me?

Colonial testimony, then, was not at all straightforward. A threatening space opened between individual experience and corporate identity, which personal narratives were called to address. On the one hand, these stories sought to protect the community by reiterating its standards; on the other hand, they spoke more of disruption than of continuity. This conflict was the particular province of the colonial "I." As a critical tool, European periodization allows us to discern the poles of this tension. As a critical fiction, however, it fixes those poles in place and stretches a

level line between them, when the means of cultural conveyance proved much rougher than that.

Ideological reproduction

A third major analytic trajectory has rescued colonial texts from obscurity by finding in them evidence of a national character. As demonstrated by their placement in academic departments, colonial writings have been studied almost exclusively in the context of their respective national literatures: French, Spanish, or English. This nationalist approach is most pronounced, and most ideological, in the United States, where the colonial era is frequently seen as the seedbed of the nation. A decisive critical shift occurs when we look to colonial personal narratives for a record of something "American." Just as European periodization stretches horizontal lines across the Atlantic from imperial centers to colonial peripheries, the search for "Americanness" cuts straight through the territory by plowing a timeline from colonial shores westward, and into the future. This critical fiction, which locates the root of national character and destiny in colonial times, enjoys wide cultural support – secular, religious, and popular – and not only carries an ideological message, but also has become an ideology in itself. Literary history has had a part to play in this production, and continues to exert an influence on critical practice.

In the United States, as we've seen, studying colonial writing *as* writing was long a task of indeterminate value. Most scholars picked through the literature with something like the joyless persistence of vintage flea-marketers – passing over knickknacks, looking for something that might passably buff up. Others were more enthusiastic, fascinated by the rough oddity of the things they found. These texts seemed to be the crucial tools of another time, but they proved difficult to handle. Ultimately, most historians filtered through the lot and took what information they needed without dawdling over intricate analysis. When they did take various forms of self-writing into their evidentiary source base, it was neither the "self" nor the "writing" that concerned them. Meanwhile, literary critics were dismayed by the lack of aesthetic material upon which to practice their distinctive modes of analysis. Scholars searching for "real" American literature thus largely turned their attention to the recognizably artistic forms of the nineteenth century.

Awkward as they were, however, colonial writings did prove crucial to another pursuit: the definition of an exemplary American character and its role in the national narrative. In the late nineteenth century, the era in which Moses Coit Tyler presented his commanding *History of American Literature*, the idea of America was in need of coherent expression. Civil war, regionalism, industrialization, urbanization, and immigration were all large-scale developments that, together, threatened to render a national identity impossible. The ideological process of nation building called for unifying icons, and images from the colonial past were central to the undertaking. In this quest, the lives that counted were those of the introspective, self-scrutinizing, and disciplined nonconformists who came to America to protect themselves and their

descendants from the corruptions of old Europe. A specific combination of forms in Puritan culture – among them the technologies of literacy, the habits of self-examination and narrative confession, the community obligation to testify, and the congregational system of government – led members of this colonial group to leave evidence of their lives in number, in detail, and in writing.

Literary historians, many of them direct descendants of these traditions, eagerly reclaimed the writing of their spiritual ancestors and delivered them to the nation at large as a biography of America. When a national self-narrative enlisted Puritan New England as an ideological site of origins, two things happened. First, it radically narrowed the field of colonial writings deemed worthy of attention. The silence that ensued was nearly deafening. Second, it read backward from the nineteenth-century to the seventeenth. This made a romanticized, incomplete version of Puritan identity into a primer for an impossible yet normative "American" self. Because of the remarkable persistence of this critical fiction, scholars today are still dismantling the dominance of New England in early American studies, and displacing a Puritan-centered canon as the standard against which other texts are measured.

Even among those who paid proper heed to the Puritans, some found the religious strictures of Puritanism too severe to represent an expansive sense of America. Another mythic figure from early America came to loosen the hold of Puritan austerity while still shouldering the ideological burden of American character and destiny: Benjamin Franklin. Only someone as remarkable as Franklin could finesse this challenge. Indeed, Franklin remains the archetypal American autobiographer, the secular prophet of Enlightenment thought in America. He charms and warms his readers to a host of Enlightenment themes: faith in knowability and improvement; the wisdom of method and experimentation; the triumph of merit and application; and the genius of fitting in with any company, be they apron-men or kings. Franklin's secularism, his self-consciousness, his incipient modernity all allowed him to bridge the gap between Puritanism and national identity by bringing autobiographical practice out of the prayer closets and into the counting-rooms, state-rooms, and drawing-rooms of America. Franklin's singular biographical role in helping the colonies become a nation has also secured his place in literary history, leading many to claim that Franklin and America invented themselves simultaneously. The critical fiction that promotes Franklin to this extraordinary prominence – at once remarkable and representative – also masks the rareness of his work. As a distinctive literary form, autobiography was a latecomer to the colonial scene. Writing that looked back from a fixed point in time and told a life story from its beginning, through its progress, to its resolution as a text in a reader's hands did emerge and grow in popularity over the eighteenth century, but most colonial first-person narratives simply did not address themselves to that comprehensive, retrospective task. The range of "true relations" that circulated around the colonial arena had different questions to answer, and different work to do. As a text relieved of its ideological burden, Franklin's first-person project richly repays our critical attention; however, the ideological reproduction of Franklin as the quintessential American autobiographer

obscures the production of life-writing that preceded, surrounded, and followed him throughout the colonial Americas.

Perhaps these critical fictions are no longer necessary. Instead of describing the panoply of forms, or establishing transatlantic timelines, or discerning the roots of national self, a new poetics of colonial personal narratives might do better to ask questions of instrumentality and praxis. How did these colonial "true relations" function? As any peripatetic colonial "I" negotiated its way between established and emerging cultural structures, exactly what kind of work was it being asked to do?

The case of the personal narrative

To answer these questions, we as readers might approach a personal narrative by thinking carefully about it as a case. In this way, we can investigate what evidence we find in first-person writing – that elusive colonial "news of themselves" – without treating the writing as either transparent or transportive. Seeing the represented self as a case allows us to combine questions of exemplarity, agency, structure, rhetoric, and contingency in new ways, while paying attention to the specific cultural histories with and against which these selves were shaped. Each example that follows isolates one sense of a "case" and pairs it with an instance of colonial first-person writing, demonstrating how we can read for testimony, while also reading against its grain.

A case is an illuminating example

Because personal narratives often record unusual events, some scholars question their representative usefulness. What can any written account tell us about the countless colonial lives that went unrecorded? How should an individual voice provide evidence of larger cultural concerns and experiences? In response, one might approach each case of life-writing as an illuminating example, regarded either by the culture in which it was produced or by the cultures in which it was preserved as a representative instance. Even as they stood apart in terms of their textual visibility and their extraordinary subject matter, first-person narratives also rehearsed and testified to ongoing stories in the broader culture. Thus, true relations can be used to represent questions and tensions *within* colonial cultures without having to be broadly representative *of* those cultures. Increase Mather, for one, called these kind of illuminating accounts "Remarkable Providences." In his compendium of such tales, pride of place goes to a narrative by Anthony Thacher, a tailor who sailed from Southampton to Boston in the spring of 1635. Thacher's story is remarkable in part because Thacher himself is unremarkable, and yet his arrival in the colonial arena casts him into a different role: through no volition or special merit of his own, his life becomes a lesson, an example, a case.

Soon after landing in Boston, Thacher, with his cousin and their families, sailed toward Marblehead. It would seem barely consequential: a strong family group, having made the ocean journey intact, navigating a small vessel on the comparatively

tiny trip down the Massachusetts coast. But the first sentence of Thacher's narrative tells otherwise: "I must now turn my drowned pen and shaking hand to indite the story of such sad news as never before this happened in New-England" (Mather 1684: 2). A deadly hurricane that shipwrecks Thacher's family propels his personal tale of woe, but that catastrophe also creates a historical moment that Thacher's shaking hand is compelled to record. By the end of the storm, Anthony Thacher and his wife are the only two of their family to survive. The couple approaches the barren strand as stragglers, not as settlers, not even as fully alive. Dazed, battered, aghast at their losses, they begin the search for remnants, and the reckoning is miserable. Of the new life they'd planned, there remain only fragments of bodies, provisions, tools. Even so, the utter loss of the material, social, familial, and affective contexts of identity leaves Anthony Thacher in the position of remaking the world. "We went off that desolate island," he writes, "which I named after my name, Thacher's Woe, and the rock, Avery his Fall, to the end that their fall and loss, and mine own, might be had in perpetual remembrance" (ibid: 10). A century before Crusoe, this Salisbury tailor claims his ground, and narrates his New World drama as building a civilization out of the wreck.

For Anthony Thacher, being colonial meant having his whole world fly apart at a dash, being astonishingly bereft, and also being an author. While Thacher's survival of the wreck was remarkable, the survival of his story is even more so. In legend and in print, it has remained in cultural view for almost four centuries: rehearsed in local traditions, reprinted in transatlantic editions, dramatized in popular odes, emblazoned on old maps, and touted on chamber of commerce websites. All these retellings memorialize the settler's resolute refusal to lose faith in the face of hardship, but the story Thacher tells continues far in excess of this providential resolution. Thacher's shipwreck became a case not because it represented a common experience, but because it memorably narrated a deeper dynamic between possession and dispossession, loss and history, that animated many unwritten colonial stories.

A case is a set of arguments and evidence

When colonials made a case for themselves, they often took an argumentative stance, adopting a defensive tone and pledging the authenticity of their knowledge against false rumors and reports. Colonial texts vowed to give satisfaction to their skeptical addressees, and rallied terms of self-justification from every available rhetorical store. Vouching for oneself was a common requirement for early modern writers, but colonial claims of legitimacy were especially complicated. "News of themselves" often took the shape of frontline reports from violent and unpredictable borderlands, with pages describing fierce politics, social chaos, and extreme physical suffering. Even as they attempted to seal the gaps between colonial and metropolitan affairs, colonial narratives unavoidably exposed that breach to view. By interrogating the rhetorical case each personal narrative prepared, we may better discern the pressures and expectations surrounding these texts. What standards of evidence were used to

pass judgment on these acts of witness, and why did the bar of credibility seem so far from reach?

Looking beyond traditional narrative forms, we can explore how motives of self-justification structured colonial first-person writing more broadly. For example, in 1680 the deposed Spanish governor of New Mexico wrote a letter to the Spanish Crown, narrating his defeat in Santa Fe. Don Antonio de Otermin makes his case by draping his bloody tale in the martyr's protective cloak, writing: "With tears in my eyes and deep sorrow in my heart, I commence to give an account of the lamentable tragedy, such as has never before happened in the world" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 171). Like Thacher, he offers his testimony as a remarkable case. Never before, these colonial authors claim, have such things happened in the world, until they happened to me. Far from the centers of European power, this particular conjunction of self and history intensified the significance of personal narratives in colonial arenas. Concerning the Pueblo revolt, Don Antonio de Otermin makes his case in part by asserting that the historical novelty of his wretchedness was so astonishing, and so profound, that he could not possibly be asked to answer for it. The ex-governor writes out of something worse than exile. His first task is to report that he is not dead; his second task is to account for how over seventy Pueblo communities overthrew New Mexico's Spanish authority in a single day. Driven from the colonial headquarters in Santa Fe, responsible for over four hundred Spanish dead, Don Antonio de Otermin must somehow account for his putative leadership of what he consistently refers to as "this miserable kingdom."

To seal his case of service to the Crown despite the loss of all but his own life, the vanquished governor finally figures himself as a martyr. The closing argument of Otermin's true relation presents a fantasy of redemptive forfeiture. In place of images of slain Spanish bodies, he pledges his own willingness to give his life a thousand times. In place of widespread scenes of carnage, he depicts his own solitary retreat from the native victory "shedding my blood for God" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 177). Awaiting relief from abroad, searching for other Spanish survivors, wondering "whether or not this miserable kingdom can be recovered," Otermin's declarations of battered personal valor seek to redeem the stark evidence of his defeat. Analyzing the case of his letter as a defensive argument, we can see how Native military and political potency came to be translated into a record of Spanish blood and tears.

A case is a problem, or a mystery

Because the content of these personal narratives is often vividly experiential and bodily, and because many were written with such palpable immediacy, it is tempting to identify with the authors. However, acknowledging the case of writing as a mystery requires us to engage consciously in acts of critical imagination, and to realize that individual narrative forms sometimes expose, and sometimes conceal, clues to the lives represented within them. Consider the case of a Jesuit father preparing to celebrate Christmas in 1669, in the heart of Onondaga country. In some senses,

Father Pierre Millet's relation of Christmas at his mission is a straightforward report. With devotional enthusiasm, he details to his religious superiors how he prepared the chapel, the ritual objects, the ceremonies, and especially the Onondaga people for the coming of the Christ child. Bells ringing, priest chanting, children singing – we easily become an audience to this festive scene. But amid the din of celebration, the voice of Onondaga headman Garakontie sounds a depth of mystery at its center. To read Millet's account as a case in this sense is to tease out that Native narrative embedded within the Jesuit's relation.

Garakontie had already proven himself a skilled diplomat and powerful ally to the French, forging a peace that satisfied the European invaders while insuring Iroquoian military, economic, and political hegemony. He had also proven sympathetic to the Catholic faith, befriending missionaries, adopting prayers, and renouncing elements of Iroquoian religious and cultural practices. From *The Jesuit Relations* we can reconstruct a record of Garakontie's political and religious negotiations, but Father Millet's Christmas letter entwines Garakontie in a double mystery. First, there is the problem of form, as the Native leader's renowned eloquence is sifted through the constraining language and consciousness of the French priest. Second, there is the problem of significance, as Garakontie alternatively accedes to, supports, and usurps the Jesuit's missionary activities. But even as Millet is the textual filter for Garakontie's leadership, Garakontie is the cultural filter of Millet's mission. In this process, Garakontie clearly takes the leading role, but the outcomes remain difficult to figure. A mystery remains: in the Christmas relation, are we reading about struggle or collaboration?

Children, and thus the future, appear to be at the heart of the matter. On three separate occasions – concerning giving catechism, worshiping at the crèche, and holding faith in dreams – Garakontie and Millet negotiate cultural power through the image of the vulnerable child. In each instance the outcome is ambiguous, but the dispute over dreams is the most enigmatic. Millet seeks to demonstrate the impiety of dreams by invoking images of infanticide. If a dream told a father to kill his child, or a mother to strangle her baby as she birthed it, would they not recognize it as demonic? After hearing this challenge, Garakontie dismisses Millet and holds forth at what the Jesuit reports is a very long meeting. The Onondaga council on dreams is, of course, unrecorded in the relation. At its conclusion, however, Garakontie summons Millet and, in the name of all his people, makes a measured pledge. In formal gatherings, there would be no further talk of dreams. Millet relates this oath to his religious superior with extravagant joy, but closes his relation with an equally careful caveat: "There is no government here, as there is in France, to make private individuals obey the resolutions of a council," he acknowledges, "and . . . our Savages experience much difficulty in forgetting entirely their ancient customs" (Thwaites 1899: 283).

Here are many silences – the effort to suppress dreams, the image of the stifled child, the priest's inhibited retreat, the council's absent record, the promise not to speak of visions, the lack of an enforcing dictate. But within the Jesuit's Christmas

relation, the Onondaga leader's voice reverberates. Garakontie sought the teaching of Christ in the chapel but preserved the elders' prerogative to teach their children outside its door. He greeted the ritual birth at the priest's crèche while mourning the dozen Onondaga children who had died that winter. He led the council in foreswearing dreams but warned the black-robe not to demand his people's souls. As readers, we can work to extract the mystery of Garakontie's case from its embeddedness in this colonial relation, but we must also accept that traces of him become more visible and more opaque in equal measure.

A case is a lexical form

Exploring the case as a lexical form, we can analyze how any personal narrative indicates a syntactical relation to surrounding signs and symbols of identity. Although we are apt to think of the first-person singular as the natural form for the individual self, there were other possibilities, other "cases" through which to articulate subjectivity and affiliation in colonial literatures. Analyzing the grammatical sense of the case exposes the various forms of "we," "they," and even "you" (the reader) behind the "I," and probes the complicated relationship between communal and individual identity inherent in colonial experience.

The narrative of John Lederer, who was the first European to explore west of the Blue Ridge Mountains in three journeys between 1669 and 1670, can serve as our case in point. Lederer was a German who wrote his narrative description of England's colonial Virginia in Latin – itself suggesting his complicated lexical condition. A physician, linguist, naturalist, and mapmaker, Lederer also knew enough of Native languages and cultures to negotiate effectively in territories beyond the reach of European settlements. Through all these translations Lederer remained, in part, an imperial "I": when he looked out on native lands he saw through the eye of conquest. However, when we chart the position of the grammatical subject and its cases in John Lederer's narrative, we find the line meant to divide the colonizing "I" and the colonized "they" becomes increasingly unclear.

When Lederer writes about "we," "our," and "us," he is most often referring to himself and a small circle of Indian fellow travelers. Sometimes "we" means only two – one German and one Native tramping through unknown territory. "We" simultaneously remains a marker of European identity against Native difference, as when Lederer returns to Virginia and describes himself as overjoyed to see Christian faces. The word "they" is equally flexible, and can refer to many types of "foreigners": Old World Europeans who ignorantly assume one can walk across North America in eight days; New World Spaniards whom he fears will enslave him in their mines; or the Virginians themselves who, jealous of his explorations, duly run him out of the colony upon his return. John Lederer's "I" may be imperial, but it is not at all clear to which group his "I" belongs.

One clue occurs at the end of his narrative journey, when he addresses the reader directly. "You must shape your course by a Compass," he writes. The "you" invoked

here is imagined, but not quite general. Lederer and the imaginary traveler to whom he gives advice form a textual "you" and "I," a virtual pair that together can pour over the map (if not the territory) of his journey. As a last piece of advice, he recommends that Europeans who come to America should not travel in large groups – "for the Nations in your way are prone to jealousie and mischief towards Christians in a considerable Body, and as courteous and hearty to a few, from whom they apprehend no danger" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 223). Make no mistake, he cautions, this particular territory already has a "we." Reading the case as a lexical form reveals an enormously complicated landscape of relationships, real and imagined. Like the other aspects of the case, it is a practical tool that serves both theoretical and historical functions in reading colonial personal narratives.

A case is a container

Across various arenas, colonial identities were forged in the absence or the radical revision of other identity-securing establishments – universalizing beliefs about God and the cosmos, political structures of church and state, social networks of family and kin, economic patterns of work and production, material surroundings of landscape and the everyday world. When these structures gave way, testimony filled in the gaps, and in an important sense colonials became the stories they told. Approaching a personal narrative, then, we might ask: what loss or absence does this case contain, and how does it act to contain it? Sometimes narrative containment proved successful. When highly formalized modes of expression enlisted individual experiences to articulate communal goals, then maintenance or even elaboration of cultural identity seemed quite possible, despite the challenges of colonial life. The synthesizing qualities of narrative transported novelty into the realm of the known, and vice versa. But sometimes such containment was a losing battle. Like the lives they represented, colonial narratives were full of rupture, contradiction, improbability, and disavowal. These weak points are also crucial points of analysis for they reveal where the cracks were, where the given forms were not equal to the task they were being asked to perform.

Although personal narratives aimed to draw boundaries around selves, they often held anomaly and identity in threatening proximity. Sometimes, identity could only be expressed in the form of a lament. In 1624, when the Virginia Assembly released their collective eyewitness history of the colony's first 12 years, the narrative form nearly burst with the horror it sought to contain. They wrote in part: "So lamentable was our scarcity that we were constrained to eat Dogs, Cats, rats, Snakes, Toadstools, horsehides and whatnot, one man out of the misery that he endured, killing his wife powdered her up to eat her, for which he was burned" (Haile 1998: 896). As a container, this one sentence strains to hold its horrid contents by opening with a broad lament, passing narrowly through the possessive pronoun and plural subject, and then tumbling headlong into a catalogue of taboos, resting finally upon the punishment of a single abject figure. But the cannibal husband consumed by fire at

the sentence's end remains both like and unlike the miserable "we" with which the lamentation began. Despite the effort to distinguish necessity from depravity, the narrative has trouble separating the worst case from the common case. Some ate corpses. Some simply dug holes in the ground and waited to die.

The grim terror of the Virginia Assembly's testimony contains more than the traumas of early famine, however. It also uses suffering as a weapon, amassing an arsenal of violent details in an ongoing battle between political factions vying for control of Virginia. By 1624 the colony's disasters were legion, and the fate of the Virginia Company hung in the balance. "The Tragical Relation of the Virginia Company" was part of a fusillade of printed documents seeking to assign blame for the appalling case the colony was in. This relation explodes with evidence of misery under the government of Thomas Smith; but even as it delivers this litany of early sufferings, it includes only a passing reference to "the Massacre." In this single buried word, the "Tragical Relation" attempts almost silently to contain its most immediate political context: the 1622 Powhatan attack on English settlements along the James River that killed almost 350 English colonists in a single day. As a case, therefore, this relation is also trying to hold back the destabilizing political aftermath of this stunning defeat by refocusing blame for Virginia's traumas on an earlier administration. Were the sensational details of early famine simply scandal-mongering in the cause of political factionalism then? What finally makes this true relation more than a political pamphlet is the case of the colonial "we." When signatories to this relation provide news of themselves, it is neither a straightforward report nor a political ploy. It is, rather, an effort to contain an ongoing nightmare that has come to define them by displaying and enclosing it in writing. Every personal narrative holds contradictions in store – arguments and omissions, spectacles and secrets, taboos and tableaux. By reading colonial narratives as containers, we can see what was left out as well as what was put in, and what were the motives, successes, and failures of such containment.

All these cases – Anthony Thacher's example, Antonio de Otermin's argument, Garakontie's mystery, John Lederer's syntax, and the Virginia Assembly's container – teach us that in order to read colonial personal narratives, we have to be able to read the dynamic between form and disruption of form. If we fail to recognize the multiple, excessive, faltering but still powerful cases colonial personal narratives made, then we will fail to understand their struggle, which is a crucial part of their colonial condition. "True relations" rendered subjects in all their complex relations; those subjects in turn both reflected and constructed a new world of words through the poetics of first-person testimony.

The Case We Are In

In our exuberantly confessional age, it is perhaps difficult to imagine that the desire to tell one's own life story is a phenomenon structured by history. It's not that colonials

didn't reflect upon and document their life experiences, for they did to an extraordinary degree. In order to read them, however, we must remain aware that our assumptions about self, experience, writing, and truth are incommensurate with the world of these texts.

As critics, as scholars, as teachers, we too are in a case. We bring to the life-writing of the colonial period the theoretical questions of our moment – questions about identity formation, about the cultural politics of colonialism, about encounters and contact zones, about the emergence of "race" as a New World phenomenon, about structures of authority and authorship, and more. Over the past several years, several intellectual schools of thought have combined to open up more radical vistas for reading colonial writings than perhaps for any other field. Several methodologies – including those of social history, multiculturalism, new historicism, narrative history, race and gender studies, postcolonialism, Atlantic world studies, and diaspora studies – have converged around a similar set of questions. Whose lives count? Who are the subjects in and of history? Whose stories get told and how?

The great challenge now is to go from the most stalwart and traditional nationalist practices into a critical arena where the boundaries are no longer apparent. Today's readers of colonial lives are treating these writings not only as a series of palimpsests reflecting external social realities, but also as a realm of internal representational struggles and strategies, which are also realities. We are acknowledging and accounting for the pleasures as well as the strangeness of these works. Most of all, we no longer need to see ourselves as scavengers in musty old archives, but as interpreters of possible pasts, entering (dare we say it?) a surprisingly new world.

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27
"Cross-Cultural Conversations": The Captivity Narrative

Lisa M. Logan

In his essay on the ethics of reading, Derek Attridge asks, "How does the new, the other, come into being when all we have is what we have?" Attridge suggests:

> The coming into being of the wholly new requires some relinquishment of intellectual control, and the other is a possible name for that to which control is ceded. Furthermore, if the settled patterns of my mental world have been so freed up that the truly other finds a welcome, my subjectivity will have been altered in some degree, and thus – especially if the cumulative effect of such events is taken into account – the self too can be said to be a creation of the other. In fact . . . when I experience alterity, I experience not the other as such (how could I?) but the remolding of the self that brings the other into being as, necessarily, no longer entirely other.

For Attridge, "feats of creativity" emerge from the "ceding" of "settled patterns in [our] mental world[s]." In his view, the self neither experiences the other as truly other, nor does it merely create the other. Rather, the self's encounter with the other "alter[s]" and reshapes the self by "destabiliz[ing] the field of the same," so that both self and other are remade. That is, "novelty is achieved by means both of the refashioning of the old and . . . the advent of the new *is* a particular refashioning of the old" (Attridge 1999: 21).

If we accept this model of the creative process as a dialogue between self and other, known and unknown, then we must also accept that the products of this process are collaborations. That is, creative acts, including acts of authorship, are neither the passive experience of the other nor the process solely of active agency. Attridge writes, "Since there is no recipe, no program, for creation . . . it cannot be purely a willed act; but since creation requires preparation and labor, it cannot be purely an event" (ibid: 22).

The following essay plays out a collaborative model of the creative process in early American captivity narratives, texts that record the histories of writing subjects

encountering the other in colonial America. My argument assumes what Attridge assumes – that literary texts are not the products of singular originary genius; nor are they transcriptions from the Muse or automatic writing from the dead. Colonial American Indian captivity narratives are an excellent example of collaboration at work in the production of texts.

Indian captivity narratives constitute collaborative texts in at least two ways. First, captivity narratives "constitute an amalgamation of voices and input, each with its own agenda and design" (Derounian-Stodola and Levernier 1993: 11). That is, their production as printed texts is the result of the labor of several agents, including prefators, printers, booksellers, editors, amanuenses, and even readers. Second, captivity narratives are conceived in the context of a colonial European culture's contact with the New World and its inhabitants. In fact, several scholars, including Amy Shrager Lang, Nancy Armstrong, and Leonard Tennenhouse, argue that Mary Rowlandson's captivity narrative provides the basis for the first purely American literary genre and even the first American novel. If we accept Attridge's argument that the creative process is about the encounter of self with other, then it follows that Indian captivity narratives offer white readers of European extraction the creative process writ large: protagonist-captives like themselves facing Native American captor-others. In the case of captivity narratives, the significance of the other goes beyond Attridge's sense of that term as that which is not and "has not been yet grasped" by the self (Attridge 1999: 21). Because Western culture and discourses historically have been the purview of white Western males, then the *other* has often been represented as something that is *not* white and male (i.e., a woman or person of color). As Attridge notes, the *new* "cannot be apprehended by the old modes of understanding and could not have been predicted by them" (ibid: 22). This is also true for the *other*. If "old modes of understanding" cannot manage the meaning of this encounter between self and other, then patterns of thought and apprehension must be reshaped in order for textual production to take place. This process can be understood as collaborative. Therefore, we might also add the voice of the other, however marginalized or silenced by the text's dominant colonial discourse, to the list of collaborative agents involved in textual production. If we include the (agency of) the other in the reshaping of thought to produce the creative process (and a printed text), then the narration of the self's encounter with that other constitutes a dialogic exchange comprised of a range of cross-cultural and intracultural conversations. This dialogically produced, collaborative narration transforms the terms of the exchange that is its purpose, reshaping self and other into not merely the sum of its dichotomized parts. The text becomes a third thing, the *new* no longer entirely the creation of solely self or solely other.

This argument has implications for scholars studying authorship, feminist theory and practice, and cross-cultural early American literature. By demonstrating a method of resistance to polarized discussions that often paralyze scholars when recovering lesser known or marginalized authors, I suggest that collaborative models of authorship – and reading – resist our current paradigms about textual production and cultural difference in the early American colonial period. Moreover, in collaboration

with Attridge, I posit a sort of "ethics" of reading the captivity narrative, one that takes responsibility for our roles in (re)creating the other but also in (re)creating readerly and scholarly selves.

What is Collaborative Authorship?

Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford maintain that the definition of collaborative writing is "far from evident." Collaboration, they write, might include "written and spoken brainstorming, outlining, note-taking, organizational planning, drafting, revising, and editing" (Ede and Lunsford: 14). Charlotte Thralls argues that all texts are inherently collaborative insofar as they contain traces of other texts. Using Bakhtin's theory of the active and dialogic "communication chain," she maintains that all utterances are related to those which precede them and to all subsequent utterances: "language is never the purview of the individual only, but always an interaction of the individual and *others*" (Thralls 1990: 66). In Bakhtin, Thralls finds language about textual production that closely mirrors that of Attridge:

> [Texts contain] varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of "our-ownness," varying degrees of awareness and detachment. These words of others carry with them their own expression, their own evaluative tone, which we (authors) assimilate, reword, and reaccentuate. (Cited in Thralls 1990: 68)

Theories of collaborative authorship acknowledge the imbeddedness of texts in the social order, the role of multiple agents and voices in textual production, and the reliance on the self as well as the other in the refashioning of the new.

Captivity Narrators as Collaborative Authors

Most scholars will recognize the following fundamental and yet unacknowledged law of all discussion about American *women's* Indian captivity narratives, texts "of," by," and "about" women (Derounian-Stodola 1998: xxvi). All arguments of any kind will inevitably tend toward the question, "But did she really write it?" This familiar question hinges on the extent of the roles played by prefators, printers, booksellers, editors, and amanuenses in the production of the text and the biases in patriarchal cultures again women and their works. Derounian-Stodola and Levernier advise that any consideration of Indian captivity narratives "must, therefore, be text-and culture-based, not author-based, because authorship is so problematical" (Derounian-Stodola and Levernier 1993: 13).

To foreground collaborative authorship in the study of Indian captivity narratives is to emphasize the role of those historical and cultural processes through which these texts were produced. This critical strategy relies on that which Foucault named the

"author function," or the "modes of circulation, valorization, attribution, and appropriation" of texts within culture, and the "manner in which they are articulated according to social relationships." Instead of asking, "Who wrote it?", we might inquire, "How under what conditions, and in what forms can something like a subject appear in the order of discourse?" (Foucault 1984: 117, 118). This question enables a discussion of the multiple processes of and agents in textual production (writers, printers, booksellers, editors, readers), and acknowledges that these processes are finally collaborative in nature.

One of the difficulties of bringing theories of collaborative authorship to bear on captivity narratives, especially those by women, is our own entrenchments in post-nineteenth-century models of authorship. Maryanne Dever articulates the problems in applying these theories:

> [Many critics use] a definition of collaboration as a simple division of labor [which] privileges the use of empirical evidence either to assert the presence of a single authorial consciousness or to reestablish individual authorship over discrete sections of a work, ultimately presenting the collaborative text as the mere sum of separate, individual contributions. The central preoccupation with the authorial signature assumes that the collaborative enterprise will invariably leave some *textual* trace or clue. (Dever 1995: 66–7)

Dever distills the difficulties of resisting traditional models of authorship in our readings of captivity narratives. Working within an academic discipline that values the productions of individuals, the single-authored book, article, and monograph, we easily revert to a treasure hunt for "textual trace[s] and clues" to the narrator's "real" or "individual" voice. Readers will point to stylistic differences within a text as evidence that this sentence or paragraph could not be the "real words" of the "author." As Dever notes, this treasure-hunt model ignores "the wider collaborative context produced through conversation, correspondence, the sympathetic hearing or reading of a manuscript, the vigorously sought opinion" (ibid: 67). That is, by hunting for textual traces of real authors, we ignore the ways that printed texts are created in the first place; texts are not generated in isolation but in communication with a culture and the people who live within it. Therefore, I propose that we shift our critical focus from the origins of texts to the texts themselves, the situations that produced them, and their effects on readers.

A "culture-based study," such as Derounian-Stodola and Levernier recommend, would try to account for the role of cultural context in the production of the text. The narrative of Mary Rowlandson, the most written about captive in early American literature, serves as an excellent example in this regard. A consideration of New England Puritan culture underscores the role that Rowlandson probably played in the production of her captivity narrative, known in New England as *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (1682) and published in London as *A True History of the Captivity & Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682). Critics frequently suspect Rowlandson's

authorship of the narrative because the text relies a great deal on scripture and the narrative style exhibits a curious (and refreshing) blend of colloquial speech and formal sermon-like prose. Scholars have questioned the authorial role played by the prefator, whose name is signed "[P]er Amicum," Latin for "by a friend," and usually assumed to be Increase Mather. However, Derounian, in her work on its "publication, promotion, and distribution," maintains that his "impact on the work came after its composition" (Derounian 1998: 240). Some cite Mather's publication of *A Brief History of the War with the Indians of New-England* (1676) as evidence of his investment in Rowlandson's narrative and his micromanaging role as the "major theorist" of King Philip's War (Breitwieser 1990: 83). Other scholars have suggested Gershom Bulkely, also one of the executors of Mary's late husband Joseph Rowlandson's estate, as an influential contributor. The fact is that at least one of these prominent men would certainly have been in conversation with Rowlandson about her text, both as she wrote it and after it was printed, simply because of its content and the importance of the war to the English Puritan community. Rowlandson's presence in a culture that was probably processing the meaning of the war through its communal consciousness demonstrates the intricacies of the collaborative process of authorship.

Another collaborative aspect of Rowlandson's text is its appearance in print in at least one English edition with the final sermon her husband, Joseph Rowlandson, preached before he died, "A Sermon of the Possibility of God's Forsaking a People . . . " The minister's sermon is "annexed" to his wife's narrative and "suggests in general . . . what the captivity title shows in particular, and together, the announcement of these works indicates a family disaster the London audience would want to read more about" (Derounian 1998: 253). In this instance, printers, booksellers, husband, wife, and readers collaborate on the production of the text, its meaning, and circulation. Back in America, Samuel Green, Jr. advertised Rowlandson's forthcoming narrative in the first American edition of *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1681): "Before long, there will be published . . . the particular circumstances of the Captivity, & Redemption of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson; and of her Children. Being pathetically written with her own Hand" (cited in Derounian 1998: 244). As these examples show, the production and interpretation of the Rowlandson text was anything but the sole effort of a single author.

Besides these external circumstances, New England literacy trends, attitudes toward published texts, and theories of the self are also key factors in the collaborative aspects of Rowlandson's narrative. Using Walter Ong's phrase "residually oral," Jane Kamensky argues that Puritan culture was at once literate and speech-centered. In such a culture, Kamensky maintains, the Bible may have been perceived "more as oral performance than as written text. Much, if not most, Bible reading was done aloud . . . [and] godly men and women read *and listened* to it closely" (Kamensky 1997: 14). In light of this argument, the pervasive presence of scripture in Rowlandson's text, often cited as evidence to suspect her authorship, is less of an oddity. Moreover, the mixture of high and low writing styles apparent throughout the text is symptomatic of its New England cutural context. As David Hall explains,

"literacy and religion were inseparable" in this culture (Hall 1989: 38). If the Bible formed the basis for reading *and* it was heard daily as spoken word, then the dialogic blend of elevated and colloquial style in Rowlandson's text is not only explicable but normative. Rowlandson's captivity narrative was produced in a culture that "conceived of speech and script as interdependent, overlapping, virtually contiguous" (Kamensky 1997: 14).

Puritan acts of *reading* might also be viewed as collaborative. As Jeffrey Hammond argues in *Sinful Self, Saintly Self*, both sermons and poems conveyed "the speaker's response to grace or provoke[d] the reader's desire to share in such a response . . . Natural eloquence was measured not by figures of speech but by the power of a text to stir its readers to piety" (Hammond 1993: 18). In other words, a Puritan text was intrinsically and traditionally collaborative insofar as it relied on *readers* for its completion. When Rowlandson writes of her trepidation of water crossings, she invokes not simply a personal fear of the wintry Connecticut River. Rather, her text points to biblical bodies of water that her readers' consciousnesses supplied. In this conversation between narrator and reader, Hammond contends, authorial identity was not perceived in terms of the modern, private self. Instead, "the selves that [Puritan poets] created were consistent with the psychology of redemption as taught by their theology. Self-expression in a modern sense was minimized because the mere self – one's private identity as a fallen individual – was precisely what Puritans wished to overcome" (Hammond 1993: 23). Similarly, Rowlandson's text positions her as an *example* of God's afflicted for the benefit and instruction of her audience. Readers were expected to "read, therefore, peruse, ponder, and from hence lay up something from the experience of another, against thine own turn comes" (Rowlandson 1990: 31). As many scholars of early American literature and culture have shown, an emphasis on individual identity would be misplaced in a consideration of Puritan texts, as the individual is merely an instance of the whole.

A True Narrative of the Sufferings of Mary Kinnan (1795) reinforces the value of theories of collaborative authorship in recovering the cultural context of captivity narratives. This brief text presents a curious melding of providential narrative, sentimental fiction, and political propaganda characteristic of eighteenth-century popular fiction and the captivity genre. Captivity is represented as a threat to the fundamental role of domesticity and white womanhood in the new and expanding nation. This lesser-known narrative recounts how a group of Shawnee attacked the Kinnan home in western Virginia in 1791, taking Mary, a mother of three, captive. Her home was destroyed and everyone in her Virginia family except one son was killed. She lived with the Shawnee and Delaware, apparently as a servant, until August 1794, when, through a letter-writing campaign by her supporters and the persistent efforts of her brother, she escaped and returned despite astounding complications. However, as Sharon M. Harris observes, Kinnan, unlike most captives, was not necessarily "restored," since her home, friends, and family in Virginia were no more. Instead, she returned to her birthplace in New Jersey, where she lived with relatives for 54 more years, writing nothing more that we know of save a

letter applying for her murdered husband's military pension. Upon her return to her family, she told her story to New Jersey printer Shepard Kollock, who, according to Kinnan's grand-niece, added embellishments and published the 15-page account.

An entry on Kinnan appears in Harris' anthology *American Women Writers to 1800* (1996) and *The Dictionary of Literary Biography: American Women Prose Writers to 1820* (1998), edited by Carla Mulford. But what does it mean to call Kinnan a "writer"? According to Oscar M. Vorhees, Kollock (the printer) "used his own gifted talents for much of the language, including, of course, the poetical quotations," but he based the story "wholly on what Mrs. Kinnan herself told him" (Vorhees 1928: 54). This claim that the text is at once factual and reconstructed is echoed in many prefaces to captivity narratives. For example, the preface to Elizabeth Hanson's narrative (1728) claims that Hanson's "Relation, as it was taken from her own Mouth, by a Friend, differs very little from the original copy, but is even almost in her own Words" (cited in Derounian-Stodola 1998: xxvii). In each case, the role of printers, transcribers, booksellers, and "friends" is central to textual production.

In Kinnan's text, approximately half of its 15 pages recount Kinnan's capture, forced march, and physical and emotional hardships during captivity. The remainder of the narrative contextualizes her escape plans in the Western wars between the US Army and the Native American Nations of Ohio and Michigan (1790–4), focusing especially on the ways that the British alliance with the Native Americans at that time exacerbated her captivity and prevented her smooth escape. It seems unlikely that Kinnan, whose only surviving writing is a letter asserting her rights to a pension, was responsible for the highly stylized rhetoric of patriotism, religion, and sentimental fiction. As Derounian-Stodola notes, "Kollock was a journalist, soldier, patriot, judge, and publisher of some importance: the British called him 'the rebel printer' " (Derounian-Stodola 1998: 108). It seems more probable that Kinnan furnished the materials for her tale orally, and that Kollock embellished with sentimental rhetoric: "Here I would mark nature progressing, and the revolutions of the seasons; and from these would turn to contemplate the buds of virtue and of genius, sprouting in the bosoms of my children"(Kollock 1998: 109). This bucolic affirmation of the new American republic matches the following flowery expression of patriotism: "O Britain! how heavy will be the weight of thy crimes at the last great day! Instigated by thee, the Indian murderer plunges his knife into the bosom of innocence, of piety, and of virtue; and drags thousands into a captivity, worse than death" (ibid: 113). Such passages serve as compelling evidence that the text was produced collaboratively through the processes of Kinnan's account and her publisher's familiarity with eighteenth-century readership and print culture.

Although such readings may *appear* to negate the roles of women in the processes of textual production, roles which feminist scholars of early American women's literature are assiduously involved in recovering and documenting, I would argue that such negation only occurs if we use more traditional models of authorship that view textual production as the effect of a single originary genius. However, a model that follows

theories of collaborative authorship performs Derounian-Stodola and Levernier's recommended "culture-based study" *and* accurately describes current feminist scholarship on women's Indian captivity narratives, which focus on the narrator/protagonist's agency within particular cultural contexts. The central A-word here is *agency* and not authorship. At once feminist and culture based, this critical strategy enables a consideration of women as subjects in, of, and to culture without reverting to paralyzing arguments about who did or did not perform the actual writing. Moreover, a focus on agency in women's roles in the collaborative production of texts is consistent with the larger feminist project of recovering and preserving previously lost women's writing. The revival of women's texts has opened up necessary and heretofore buried questions about nation, class, race, and authority and revolutionized early American literary history, aesthetics, and canon. Using theories of collaborative authorship preserves the role of agency in our investigations while also privileging a consideration of the cultural processes underpinning textual production. As Nancy K. Miller has so brilliantly stated, "the postmodernist decision that the Author is dead, and subjective agency along with him, does not necessarily work for women and prematurely forecloses the question of identity for them . . . because women have not had the same historical relation of identity to origin, institution, production, that men have had" (Miller 1986: 104). To talk about authorship in a way that complicates genius and origins even as we insist on the recovery of texts by and about women enables a rethinking of the patriarchal and binary paradigms of authorship that have characterized interpretation (and canonization) for too long.

Cross-Cultural Conversations

Several critics have addressed the captivity narrative in terms of its "newness" and particularity to colonial America. For example, the work of Roy Harvey Pearce, Richard Van der Beets, David Downing, and David L. Minter represents early scholarship on the captivity narrative that considered the genre as a phenomenon that arose from and upheld the New World English Puritans' belief in a providential universe. According to these scholars, the genre used Puritan biblical understandings, including typology, to reproduce the Puritan self and define a discursive space through which members of the elect could reaffirm and represent their cultural authority over the meaning of the New World and its others.

A second wave of scholars, which includes Christopher Castiglia, Teresa Toulouse, and Margaret Davis, considered the figure of the woman in the wilderness as a site of individual and/or national transgression and/or complicity. In this view, the captive's position outside of normative cultural space enabled her to exercise agency and even authority not afforded by dominant cultural practices. In this vein, I argued in 1993 that Mary Rowlandson's narrative negotiated the physical, ideological, social, and discursive spaces of a woman subject in New England Puritanism. In my view, Rowlandson's rendering of captivity and restoration negotiated not only the progress

of a Puritan soul, but also the processes of a Puritan woman desperate to recover her former cultural position that captivity among the "heathens" displaced and compromised.

More recently, scholars such as Michelle Burnham and Tara Fitzpatrick have taken contextual approaches that focus on the broader cultural work the genre performs. Burnham (1997) considers the sentimental aspects of captivity, linking cultural with emotional border crossing. She argues that these "crossings" elicit new paradigms of cultural understanding in readers and captives themselves. Fitzpatrick (1991) considers the ways that tensions between captives and ministers transformed both elite and popular religious frameworks of the New England covenant. Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse argue that Rowlandson's captivity narrative signals the emergence of a specifically British American bourgeois identity; in their reading, Rowlandson's text demonstrates that "one has to go to America . . . to understand where English novels come from" (Armstrong and Tennenhouse 1992: 388).

These strategies of inquiry enable a focus on the relationship of the genre to the broader culture in which it was produced, but do not necessarily accommodate Attridge's notion of the "new" as the outcome of creative processes negotiated by self and other. That is, the Indian captivity narrative, premised on and made possible by the forced encounter between a "self" from a European colonial culture and an "other" from a colonized Native American culture, emerges as a new genre because of the very terms of its processes of production. That is, the process of a self letting go "settled patterns" and "intellectual control" in the face of that which is not known and opening up to that which "destabilizes the field of the same" structures the captivity narrative as "new" in its composition, form, and content (Attridge 1999: 21). What I wish to address here is those narrative moments defined by this process of cultural and textual production: the collaboration between self and other that brings into being the "new" – self and other refashioned in text.

The product of this collaboration might be viewed, in spite of the protests of captivity narrators and prefators themselves, as a cross-cultural entity, the work of two cultures working together in cooperation. This new entity challenges its readers to consider the ways that difference is made possible. Difference emerges not merely through the fact of the other's presence, but by the processes of exchange and encounter between a self in the process of ceding itself, of giving up its cultural authority, of *collaborating* with the unfamiliar, whose cultural positions emerge from the spaces of the narrative. That is, the genre is enabled by spaces within the reading and writing self in creative negotiation with what and whom it does not yet know. The project for us as readers and critics is to recognize that collaboration and what it makes possible.

It might seem strange to view the captivity narrative as a collaborative effort between European and Native American textual agents. Certainly, aspects of the narratives themselves work to prevent such an interpretation and the historical European colonial participants in its production would likely consider any cross-cultural cooperation as collusion with the enemy. Title pages consistently highlight

the cruelty and inhumanity of savage heathens in contrast to the gentle goodness of white women captives, representations that the narratives themselves, at least on a superficial level, often seem to support. Prefators of texts published in Puritan New England emphasize the instructional use of captivity in exemplifying the operations of divine providence and urge readers to view the captives' trials in the wilderness as metaphors for their own spiritual journeys. Writers of prefaces consistently remonstrate with readers to read according to plan. The preface to Rowlandson's text, probably the work of Puritan minister Increase Mather, cautions: "*Reader*, if thou gettest no good by such a Declaration as this, the fault must needs be thine own" (Rowlandson 1990: 31). A century and a half later, James Seaver frames *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* as a "piece of biography," "especially for children," "that shows . . . what trials may be surmounted; what cruelties perpetrated; and what pain endured, when stern necessity holds the reins, and drives the car of fate" (Seaver 1992: 1992: 50). The idea that these noble European colonial subjects could be in collaboration with their barbaric adversaries would seem to start printers and ministers spinning in their graves.

Over the years many scholars have noted that moments of ambiguity persist despite the captivity text's ostensibly dominant cultural aims, which are registered most strenuously in the efforts of prefaces. These moments have been read variously as signs of acculturation, Stockholm syndrome, transgression, or evidence of the captive's authorial voice. Ralph Bauer (1997) has observed that captivity narrators are "creole" (i.e., neither of the metropolitan center, nor of the "savage" or "exotic" wilderness). He argues that captives' creole identities enable them to assert a form of authority that contests dominant cultural narratives composed by and circulating in the European center. Historian Neal Salisbury concludes that Rowlandson "was neither the entirely unreconstructed English Puritan nor the 'white Indian' who, like some later captives, completely forsook her original identity" (Salisbury 1997: 32). Each of these perspectives is important in deepening our views of the contexts in which captivity narratives were produced. This portion of the essay will further the arguments of previous scholars by examining moments of cross-cultural encounter in which the self and other enter a field where cultural boundaries are ambiguous and fluid. I will consider these moments as examples of captives and captors engaged in collaborations that produce the texts themselves. That is, I shall consider how these moments constitute cross-cultural conversations that construct the other as an agent in the production of the text.

One significant indicator of cross-cultural collaboration is the lessening or absence of recuperation of the native person/peoples or native culture into the dominant cultural narrative of the speaker. We must attend to moments when the narrative self suspends accommodation or explanation of the other and allows difference simply to exist in the text. On the simplest level, the use of native language in Rowlandson's narrative serves as an example of the self ceding intellectual control by reporting the language of her captors without comment. Rowlandson consistently uses the words *Saggamore*, *Wigwam*, and *Nux*, incorporating native language into her own and

seeming to accept that Native American utterances may more aptly describe the details of her experiences in captivity. Furthermore, Rowlandson clearly understands a great deal of her captors' language, as she reports conversations with them about travel, food, the possibility of her release, the whereabouts of her husband and children, etc., and frequently serves as an intermediary for new or more recalcitrant captives. Salisbury explains such familiarity by relating that Joseph Rowlandson once kept a Native American servant and that "Nipmuc people of Nashaway had helped the town [of Lancaster] get started and continued to contribute to its economic well-being" (Salisbury 1997: 11).

This economic interconnectedness along the colonial frontier is mirrored by Rowlandson's own business and service practices while in captivity. She readily apprehends her position as servant, referring to Quannopin and his wife, King Philip's sister Weetamoo (Wettimore in the English version), as her master and mistress. In addition to gathering wood and food and carrying her share of household goods on the trail, Rowlandson engages her knitting and sewing skills to earn food and keep whenever possible. Scholars have interpreted these practices as signs of acculturation and even of rugged American individualism. Important to a consideration of cross-cultural collaboration, however, is that Rowlandson presents her economic responses to captivity as normative and perhaps assumes that her readers would see parallels to general economic practices among the English and Native Americans along the New England frontier. Rowlandson narrates her trade operations as part of daily life; she knits a pair of socks and receives a scrap of food; she sews a shirt and earns a shilling; a cap gets her an invitation to dinner. The point is that these moments are narrated factually and without embellishment via scriptural or larger providential meaning. Rowlandson's business collaborations with her captors present a cross-cultural exchange that may have been no different economically from the colonial reader's.

Perhaps the most curious instance of narration without embellishment occurs in the nineteenth remove, when Rowlandson carefully describes a Wampanoag pre-battle ritual:

> There was one that kneeled upon a *Deer-skin*, with the Company round him in a Ring, who kneeled, striking upon the Ground with their hands and with sticks, and muttering or humming with their Mouths. Besides him who kneeled in the Ring, there also stood one with a Gun in his hand: Then he on the Deer-skin made a speech, and all manifested assent to it; and so they did many times together. Then they bade him with the Gun go out of the Ring, which he did, but when he was out they called him in again; but he seemed to make a stand; then they called the more earnestly, till he returned again. Then they all sang. Then they gave him two Guns, in either hand one. And so he on the Deer-skin began again; and at the end of every Sentence in his speaking they all assented, humming or muttering with their Mouths, and striking upon the Ground with their Hands. Then they bade him with the two Guns go out of the Ring again; which he did a little way. Then they called him in again, but he made a stand, so they called him with greater earnestness; but he stood reeling and wavering, as if he knew not whether he should stand or fall, or which way to go. Then they called

> him with exceeding great vehemency, all of them, one and another: after a little while, he turned in, staggering as he went, with his Arms stretched out; in either hand a Gun. As soon as he came in, they all sang and rejoyced exceedingly a while. And then he upon the Deer-skin made another speech, unto which they all assented in a rejoycing manner. (Rowlandson 1990: 55)

This passage is remarkable for its cultural detail and its length, uninterrupted by the observer's judgment or the insertion of correlating scriptural passages. It presents a cultural ritual that seems to make little sense to its observer and, no doubt, colonial readers. In contrast to an earlier passage, when she notes the infernal din and "outragious [*sic*] roaring and hooping" of her captors (ibid: 37), Rowlandson here permits this ceremony to stand on its own. The passage resonates as an important moment of Native American cultural cohesiveness, and the manner of narration seems to accept and recognize its importance. Salisbury writes that "although [Rowlandson] was ostensibly appalled at the fact that [the ceremony] was organized by a Christian Indian, her detailed description betrays a deeper fascination." He continues, "the ceremony also modified precolonial tradition in its use of guns" (Salisbury 1997: 100). Rowlandson offers no representative English response, concluding rather lamely: "And so they ended their business, and forthwith went to Sudbury Fight." She then turns to the strange response of her captors once they return in apparent victory – they behaved "rather like Dogs (as they say) which have lost their Ears" (Rowlandson 1990: 55).

Perhaps we can account for Rowlandson's fascination with the ceremony by considering the role of the figure in the middle, he that holds the gun and enters and leaves the circle of his comrades. While she is not privy to the Wampanoag interpretation of this ritual, Rowlandson is quite familiar with the the use of language and ceremony to elicit audience response in Puritan sermons and the condition of being at once *in the midst of* and *outside the circle of* her captors. Repeatedly, Rowlandson laments "having no Christian Friend near me" (ibid: 35). She remarks that "the *Indians* were as thick as Trees; if one looked before one there was nothing but *Indians*, and behind one nothing but *Indians*, and so on either hand; I myself in the midst; and no Christian Soul near me" (ibid: 41). Mitchell Breitwieser has argued that this rendition of a "world without others" is typical of an English Puritan worldview, "which is an intentionally isolated culture, severed from its social media or neighborhoods, self-enclosed and self-generated, fed out of its own libidinal interior." Breitwieser finds that Rowlandson resists "interchange and creative cultural evolution" (Breitwieser 1990: 172–3).

However, an examination of the eighth remove challenges this view. Here Rowlandson and her captors ford the Connecticut River, a geographical passage that seems to mark the physical, emotional, and cultural gulf between her present condition and her home. She writes: "When I came ashore, they gathered all about me, I sitting alone in the midst." As her reunited captors swap news, Rowlandson emerges from what she characterizes as a state of shock and falls to weeping. To situate her response,

she turns to the Psalm, "By the rivers of Babylon, then we sate down, yea we wept when we remembered Zion." Rowlandson weeps because of her present condition, "gathered about" by strangers and cut off by the river from all that represents home – her Christian friends and family, the geography of the town of Lancaster (versus the confusing geography of the wilderness), and the social, emotional, and discursive frameworks that have been displaced by captivity. Her captors, who treat their captives as members of the tribe, offer the comfort of food and ask her the cause of her distress. Rowlandson "could hardly tell what to say; yet I answered, they would kill me" (Rowlandson 1990: 42).

This exchange presents Rowlandson as both outsider and insider. She weeps because she has traveled far outside her English circle and feels herself in the midst of her enemies. Yet these same enemies offer food and relief, inviting her into their circle. That she is already part of that circle is evident from what we know of Algonquin practices of captivity and also from the response of "King Philip's crew." Moreover, Rowlandson's own response, "they would kill me," reveals her capacity to negotiate her own needs for food and reassurance and her captors' worldview now that she resides in a new place with a new family. She has processed and accommodated their question, "What, will you love *English-men* still?" (ibid: 33). These exchanges demonstrate, contrary to Breitwieser's view of Rowlandson as an isolated self, that her encounters with the other are increasingly comprised of moments of exchange and, I would argue, collaboration.

Finally, we might understand Rowlandson's fascination with the *powwow* in the context of her return to her English friends. Back inside her circle of friends, she relates that "when all are fast about me . . . my thoughts are upon things past." She remembers "in the night season, how the other day I was in the midst of thousands of enemies" (Rowlandson 1990: 64). Although redeemed, both physically and spiritually, Rowlandson's thoughts remain *outside the circle* of her friends. As in the structure of the *powwow*, her friends call for her return and rejoice, but she seems to "make a stand." Like the man with the gun, Rowlandson seems on the periphery, "reeling and wavering, as if [s]he knew not whether [s]he should stand or fall, or which way to go." Such is the dilemma of the returned captive, who has seen the patterns of her mental world unsettled and experienced not merely the alterity of the other but the refashioning of the self through that encounter. Just as she has intended to create the other in her text, so the other has in fact created her. The captivity narrative becomes not the narrative of colonial domination but the production of intercultural creative agents.

Nearly one hundred and fifty years later, ethnohistorian James Seaver published a documentary of his interviews with Mary Jemison, an 80-year-old white woman taken captive as an adolescent by Shawnee and adopted by the Seneca. Jemison married two Native American husbands, a Delaware and a Seneca, and raised several children with the Seneca in upstate New York. Karen Kilcup includes Jemison in the anthology, *Native American Women's Writing, 1800–1924* (2000). Distrustful of the written documents and motivations of white people, Jemison offers her narrative in the presence of a

lawyer. As Susan Walsh reports, Jemison later told a visitor: "I did not tell them who wrote it down half of what it was" (Seaver 1992: 52). Several scholars have played on the meaning of Jemison's Seneca name, Deigwene's or Dehgewanus, translated as "the sound of two voices falling," to suggest the bicultural nature of the narrative, especially its interweaving of Native American elements of oral autobiography with Seaver's written text (Namias 1992: 15; Kilcup 2000: 31; Walsh 1992: 51).

Seaver addresses his work to young readers, the future citizens of the US, "who would learn to walk in the 'paths of peace' " (Seaver 1992: 49). Seaver wishes to "transmi[t] to future generations the poverty, pain, wrong, hunger, wretchedness and torment . . . that has been endured by those who have lived in obscurity, and groped their lonely way through a long series of unpropritious events, with but little help besides the light of nature" (ibid: 50). Seaver offers this biography as a paean to national progress and the peace that will surely ensue, hoping that the "lessons of distress" will "increase our love of liberty: to enlarge our views of the blessings that are derived from our liberal institutions; and to excite in our breasts sentiments of devotion and gratitude to the great Author and finisher of our happiness" (ibid: 52).

But Jemison's life directly contradicts Seaver's stated goals. By 1797, Jemison had rejected all offers to return to her white "friends" and had been granted a tract of land by the Seneca for her resolution. Jemison's decision is based on her certainty that even if she "should be so fortunate as to find my relatives, they would despise [my children], if not myself; and treat us as enemies; or, at least with a degree of cold indifference, which I thought I could not endure" (Seaver 1992: 119–20). Although her children are both Scotch-Irish and Seneca, the text reflects representative readers' views by referring to them as "a large family of Indian children" (ibid: 119). Curiously, Seaver stresses Jemison's whiteness, her fair complexion, her light blue eyes, her Irish accent, and her apparent compliance with many of the ideals of the cult of domesticity, including her "natural goodness of heart" and "love of family" (ibid: 56). While Seaver's narrative strategies attempt to recuperate Jemison for US readers, Jemison's life story disrupts this process. The narrative also reveals Jemison's rights as a Seneca woman to decide where and with whom to live, to participate in tribal political life, and to own and dispense of land even as a married woman. Seaver accommodates these disruptions by citing Jemison's age and expressing doubts about her memory at such an advanced age, along with her lack of education and troubled life (ibid: 51).

A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison epitomizes the Indian captivity narrative as a collaborative project. It reverses the terms of the captive white woman in the wilderness and presents readers with a Native American agent of European origins in conversation with an educated white male US citizen determined to construct the meaning of her narrative for "American" readers. Jemison's views of colonial American history are at times omitted, disputed, and overwritten; Seaver turns to white males who survived the conflicts and even Jemison's thieving "cousin" George to achieve his aims. But Mary Jemison's story persists, and Seaver cannot write his book without her.

As these examples demonstrate, the captivity narrative traces the encounter between two distinct cultures. The captive lives "interculturally," in the midst of or within the boundaries of the other culture. In the case of Mary Rowlandson, Hannah Dustan, Hannah Swarton, and Mary Lewis Kinnan, the captive lives within but also without the other culture and perhaps those boundaries begin to blur. Scholars have argued that the processes of narration attempt to stabilize these moments of ambiguity and to construct a clear self and other. But the consideration of these texts as cross-cultural or even bi-cultural productions complicates this view. To consider the captivity narrative through the lens of collaborative authorship is to see traces of ourownness and otherness melded together. Once narrated, the encounter between self and other has become, through the process of collaboration, a third thing, no longer self, no longer other. It has become new.

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28
Epic, Creoles, and Nation in Spanish America

José Antonio Mazzotti

Traditional studies of the Spanish American epic tend to grant this genre a respectable, though ultimately subsidiary, position within the great corpus of Spain's literary Golden Age. As an elite form of production that recounted and glorified the events of the Conquest, the Spanish American epic must of course be understood in relation to the European models it attempted to imitate and with which it was in constant dialogue. However, by examining these texts in relation to their own historical context (i.e., in relation to an overall system of cultural production), I intend to reveal some of the peculiarities of this other epic discourse. My focus here will be on several key poems produced in the two most important Spanish American viceroyalties, Mexico and Peru. My theoretical approach in the analysis of these texts is relatively new in the study of this genre in the New World. It is an approach that places these poems in a dialectical relationship with their writing subjects and with the complex issues of politics and identity involved in the reformulation of the epic genre. Because such an approach is necessarily interdisciplinary in conjunction with the most recent developments in the so-called "colonial" field, its assumptions often conflict with the more traditional, literary approach that largely limits itself to tracing a text's affiliations with other canonical texts.

The alternative approach of this essay will provide a broad, more contextually satisfying (though only introductory) analysis of the emerging dialectic between a social group (distinguished creoles), a literary genre (epic poetry), and a collective identity (the ethnic nation) – three elements which, in my judgment, were intimately connected. We can attribute the failure of traditional literary criticism to detect and fully scrutinize this extraordinary relationship in large part to the strict division between the humanities and the social sciences which long defined the boundaries of scholarly inquiry. Any separation of the constituent elements of this analysis (the creoles, epic poetry, and ethnic nation) into three distinct objects of study (exclusive to history, literary criticism, and political science, respectively), only reflects the fault lines of a limited epistemological tradition and leads to phantasmagoric conclusions.

In terms of the historical context, it is critical to recognize that most seventeenth-century creoles found themselves in the difficult situation of having to accept an inferior social position. In reaction, creole writers propagated many exalted descriptions of Mexican and Peruvian grandeur and of the heroism of the Spanish conquerors. Moreover, in an effort to bolster the authority of their textual accounts, New World writers consistently invoked their familiarity with indigenous history and culture. While the threatening and majoritarian vitality of this indigenous presence prompted creoles to align themselves ideologically with peninsular Spaniards, it also forced the creoles to engage in an ongoing and asymmetrical dialogue with the native traditions. It was especially important for creoles to counterpoise their own authority to that of the local Spanish administrators, especially after the 1542 New Laws and the subsequent decline of the *encomendero* system threatened to further empower Crown officials. Ultimately, the creoles were in a profoundly ambivalent position, unable to disengage themselves from the same indigenous majority over whom they unquestionably assumed ontological superiority.

Thus positioned, creoles began to forge the characteristics of a power elite, a group who, with the coming of independence in the nineteenth century, would continue to distance themselves (although not in the official discourse) from the indigenous masses. In this sense, there was little possibility of creating the kind of nation-state and modern nationalism modeled by the European Enlightenment. What emerged instead was a peculiar sociopolitical formation in which a neo-European, ethnic, and racial ideal prevailed within a radically heterogeneous and multiracial context.

The history of the creoles was a troubled one from the very beginning. As Bernard Lavallé notes, the use of the term "creole" to refer to the children born in the Indies to Spanish parents – first documented as early as 1567 in Peru – constituted a semantic transgression; originally, "creole" was the most common way of referring to children born outside of Africa to African-born slaves (Lavallé 1993: 15–25). As such, one finds many historical references to "black creoles" or "creole slaves" in colonial writings. The application of the term "creole" to sixteenth-century people who considered themselves white (and therefore of "pure blood") involved a distortion of sorts. It was an inflection which marked the early displacement of American-born whites in terms of their identity and social status within the vice-regal order. This derogatory christening took on enormous proportions for the "creoles" of European descent, many of whom already labored under a cloud of suspicion which accused them of being biological half-breeds. After all, as Stuart Schwartz (1995) and Elizabeth Kuznesof (1995) have shown, somewhere between 20 percent and 40 percent of the *mestizo* population were registered as creoles by their Spanish fathers in the first two generations after the Conquest. In cultural terms as well, creoles were considered suspect for having suckled at the breasts of indigenous and African women, ingested New World breezes, waters, vegetables, fruits, and animal products, enjoyed intimate interactions with servant children, and generally engaged in many other forms of "impurity." In the eyes of many peninsular Spaniards, these factors cast indelible black marks upon the moral and intellectual reputation of the neo-Spaniards born in the

Americas. This sentiment had been loudly proclaimed as early as 1574 by Juan López de Velasco (1971: 37–8), an official cosmographer and chronicler of the Spanish Crown. The ontological depreciation on the part of the peninsular Spaniards could not be more evident. Blaming this degradation on prolonged exposure to the New World environment, peninsular Spaniards early on condemned both creoles and baqueanos (Spaniards who had years of experience and laid down deep roots in the Indies) as little more than Indians in the making.

In addition to having their reputations tarnished by doubts about their racial origins and their suspicious dietetic and cultural influences, the economic security of creoles was equally precarious by the mid-sixteenth century. We must understand the economic threat to creoles in relation to the history of the New World *encomienda*. In the initial decades of Spanish exploration and conquest, the Indies became the site of accelerated social mobility for all those who dared to enlist in a scouting party carrying out *entradas* (Indian hunts) or establish a new *población* (a Spanish town with a local council). It was through these daring ventures that the first conquerors eventually received Crown grants of *encomienda*, giving them the lordly rights to the tribute (and hence to the lands and labor) of the newly conquered Indian vassals. And despite its early abolition in 1542, the institution of *encomienda* managed to survive in the New World – thanks to the bloody protests of the conquerors themselves and the claims of their descendants – but in restricted ways, until it disappeared in 1718.

In the sixteenth century, the *encomienda* was a critical component of private enterprise in the New World, of vital importance to both commerce and mining. In fact, without an appreciation for the mix of premodern and modern elements involved in the history of the *encomienda* system, it is impossible to understand the phenomenon of the early Hispanicization of the Americas. In one way or another, the first groups of adventurous Spaniards – largely of plebian and provincial origin (in López de Velasco's words, "lost and restless souls") – managed in a short time to achieve great social and economic power in the new territories. In a few short decades, the magnificent kingdoms across the Atlantic became the site and the reason behind the expansion of the realm of possible Hispanic identities. "Creole sentiment" obviously arose even before the actual emergence of the creoles themselves (see Lafaye 1995: 7–8; Lavallé 1978: 39–41; Alberro 1992: 2000). This localist sentiment would come under fire and finally be reformulated in the wake of the passage of the 1542 New Laws which, as mentioned earlier, seriously damaged the economic base of the emerging New World aristocracy.

In the face of this continuous frontal assault, the defense of the rights of the original conquerors of the New World was passed on to next generations of creole sons and grandsons. These creoles were forced to stand by and watch Crown officials squander the "splendors" of the *encomienda* system, while their own families were increasingly relegated to conditions of obvious indigence. Back in Spain, accusations of unbridled greed were not the only charges made against Spaniards who stayed too long in the Indies; the conquerors and baqueanos were also condemned for siring a breed of lazy, turbulent, and undisciplined children. An anonymous satirist of the times conjured

up the commonplace, vice-regal image of creoles as overtly and excessively lazy and solicitous in his scornful reference to Mexico's creoles as "a thousand solicitors clinging on to the Viceroy" (Dorantes de Carranza 1987: 106).

Creoles, for their part, blamed the deepening social fissure on peninsular latecomers and voiced their numerous complaints from a perspective of pronounced melancholy. One could even argue that the first generation of creole writers exhibited a partially fractured view of universal history. This was surely the case in Mexican writings by Terrazas, Saavedra Guzmán, and Dorantes de Carranza; and in the Peruvian works by Pedro de Oña and even by the Inca Garcilaso, whose *mestizo* status put him on equal footing with the creoles in terms of being deprived of paternal inheritance. From this melancholic and fractured perspective, the Golden Age of the *encomienda* was gone forever. In its place, vice-regal bureaucratization brought new waves of peninsular Spaniards whose only purpose was to enrich themselves at the expense of the New World lands and peoples, exploiting the possibilities first opened up by the Herculean efforts of the creoles' conquering fathers and grandfathers. The emergence of pejorative terms describing the American-born children of the conquerors (beginning with the very term "creole" itself) only worsened creole resentment. Creole writers began to argue that the Crown's refusal to symbolically recognize and materially compensate the children of the conquerors was a violation of the universal code of victorious warriors (a fundamental tenet of both imperial Rome and medieval Spain). Creoles also insisted upon the principles of *pactum subjectionis*, which stipulated that kingly authority had to attend to the needs of its most loyal subjects and those of their direct descendants. "The centuries are full of laws / of generous payments from the kings," Terrazas wrote. "You are the only one, sad Mexico, who is missing / that which no one in the world is denied" (Terrazas 1941: 84–5).

Between the scorn of some peninsular voices and the condemnation of others, a general attitude of disenchantment with the New World prevailed in Spanish writings of the sixteenth century. To refute this pejorative discourse, some creoles began to counterpoise a categorical affirmation of New World ethnic, geographic, and climatic superiority. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, voices had emerged in both Mexico and Peru which actually insisted upon the logic of relocating the site of the *axis mundi* to the American continent. Through a variety of tropological maneuvers, these authors ended up identifying the territorial majesty of the New World with the superior moral qualities of Spaniards born in the Indies.

In the case of New Spain, Bernardo de Balbuena offers a paradigmatic example of the resolution of tensions between creoles and peninsulars through the elaboration of a discursive microcosm which placed Mexico in a superior position *vis-à-vis* all other centers of civilization. Even though Balbuena was born in Spain (ca. 1561), he had moved to Mexico by the time he was about three years old (see Rojas Garcidueñas 1982: ch. 1). His lifelong experience in the New World and his intimate knowledge of the land and the complexities of the great city erected upon the remains of Tenochtitlan led him to proclaim the supremacy of the "Mexican paradise" over any other place on earth. In 1604 he published his *Grandeza mexicana*, an epistle in triple

stanzas to a beautiful creole lady (Isabel de Tovar y Guzmán). Using an early literary baroque form to exalt the great City (Mexico) in the New World, Balbuena's work characterized the creole elite in terms of their lofty intellectual stature, their dominion of the saddle, the splendor of their architecture, the vigor of their commerce, the benevolence of their climate, and the efficacy of their local governments. Balbuena's text, then, placed Mexico at the very center of Western civilization, essentially provincializing both Europe and Asia (i.e., the Old World). The agents of this progressive historical narrative were the creoles, who, far from advocating political separatism, added greater breadth and supreme loftiness to the imperial patria.

In Peru, examples of this affirmative posturing occur in the mysterious poets of the early seventeenth century who interjected their American perspectives into learned European discourse. According to the anonymous author of "Discurso en loor de la poesía" (1608), the journey to the Antarctic regions (i.e., South America) rejuvenated the art of poetry; and in the famous epistle entitled "Amarilis a Belardo" (1621), the anonymous author proclaimed that the progeny of the conquerors elevated Spain as much as, if not more than, the peninsular nobility (see Colombí-Monguió 1997; Chang-Rodríguez 2001). In support of this claim, Francisco Fernández de Córdoba, a prominent creole intellectual from Huánuco, referred to the honorable Peruvians as "the improved [Spanish] nobility" (Fernández de Córdoba 1621: 8). Alongside these works, one can also place Fray Buenaventura de Salinas' massive *Memorial de historias del Nuevo Mundo Pirú* (1630), an exaltation of the many superior qualities of his native City of the Kings (Lima). Included in Salinas' manifesto is the claim that Lima's creoles were irrefutably capable of improving the condition of the indigenous population and thereby effectively contributing to the imperial model of a well-kept flock whose temporal and spiritual needs are always fulfilled.

Most interesting to note, in light of Salinas' claim, is that only 6 of the 88 existing corregidores, or local officials, serving in the Peruvian Viceroyalty in 1630 were actually creoles from Lima; "the rest, the great majority, were individuals of Spanish nationality previously appointed by the king of Spain or by the Peruvian Viceroy" (Bromley 1959: 288). In fact, in response to the discourse of local exaltation that had begun to circulate in the years leading up to Salinas' *Memorial*, opposing voices like that of Mateo Rosas de Oquendo appeared to take creole bashing to new, more corrosive extremes. Juan del Valle y Caviedes voiced the most virulent diatribes against creoles in the seventeenth century, and Esteban de Terralla voiced them in the late eighteenth century. In the face of this scornful differentiation between peninsular Spaniards and creoles in the American Viceroyalties, creoles developed a marked originality in their expressions of self-affirmation, according to D. A. Brading (1991: 5). The distinction noted by Brading need not have been absolute; however, keep in mind with Dubois (1979: 12) that even in the most successful cases of mimesis, one can usually detect the presence of differential imitation or imitation that challenges a unique and indisputable model. This is certainly true in the case of creole writing and visual production from the vice-regal period. Given the shared interactions of daily vice-regal life and their common origins and ancestry, creoles

increasingly came to feel a sense of a collective, New World identity. At the same time, the characteristics of that creole identity could vary substantially according to the specifics of place, time, and modality of expression.

This brief overview of "militant creolism" (an expression used by Lavallé 1993) and the rise of creole agency in the writing of historical, epic discourse in both Peru and Mexico, can only begin to suggest the breadth, scope, and eloquence of this important creole genre. It is pivotal to keep in mind here that, at the dawn of the seventeenth century, the number of creoles whose descent could be traced directly to the conquerors and who therefore enjoyed honorable status and sat relatively high up on the vice-regal social pyramid, only numbered around 703 in Mexico (Pagden 1987: 56) and another 500 or so in Peru (Latasa Vassallo 1999: 2). The creole epic discourse that emerged from this limited social sector was extremely complex, and found its most prominent mode of expression in reformulated epic poetry. To fully appreciate the complexity of this genre in the New World, one must be ever attentive to the elitist character of both its origins and its chosen strategies. A relatively small sector of creoles dared to wield the power and prestige of the written word to uniquely reformulate supposedly predefined discursive forms.

In this sense, we must formulate any argument about the dialectics between creoles, epic writing, and nationhood in the Spanish American Viceroyalties in relation to the mode of expression that creoles first utilized to trace the contours of their own ontology: the written word. It was the written word that had facilitated the accelerated diffusion of ideas and entertainment in the New World of the sixteenth century. It was also the written word – in official correspondence and public decrees – that helped deal the fatal blows to the New World populations, justifying the Crown's strategy of military and economic domination. And it was this same written word that Ángel Rama would so aptly describe as the nearly-imperceptible, but ever-multiplying brick of the immense wall of cultural separation between the Europeans and indigenous peoples (Rama 1984: chs. 1–3). Because of its very prestige, the written word also became the tool of those creole groups vying for administrative control over the New World societies. It proved an effective means to both negotiate with the powers that be, and to express the peculiarities of creole pride, anxiety, complaint, and frustration. In the imaginary of some descendants of the conquerors, the written word became a kind of exemplifying mirror, both reflecting a creole reading of the past and also projecting a creole vision of the future. In short, the imported practice of the written form gave birth to a cultural expression that would eventually come to be called "Spanish American writing."

This term is obviously somewhat arbitrary, for it reduces the written word in the New World to its well-recognized role of spelling the domination of the Spanish language within the American territories (even to this day, as the Westernization of the Americas gets reinforced through the much-touted processes of globalization). However, the written (Castilian) word in the Americas also became the vehicle for new semiotic configurations, as writers began to introduce rhythms, words, and meanings grounded in native languages and cultures (see Mignolo 1995). In other

words, the "discovery" of 1492 once again transformed the language of Castile, which had been a corrupt dialect of Latin but eventually rose to become one of Europe's first national languages. In just a few decades, Castilian Spanish – already heterogeneous from its long history of contact with the Arabs – began to acquire greater expressive richness through the inclusion of regional, lexical, and hybrid variations. Unforeseen modalities of written expression were but one result of the Atlantic exchange (the wealth of new oral modalities was another result, offering yet another paradigmatic example of the New World's communicative complexity). Even though many of these new forms of written expression remained hidden at the time (like the unrivaled case of the *Nueva coronica* by Guaman Poma de Ayala, finished in 1615 but discovered only in 1908), the written word nonetheless proved to be a viable space for fusions, divergences, and creative processes unimaginable from an Old World perspective. A more conservative commentator hurled derogatory labels such as "dirty Castilian," "barbarous jargon," and "corrupt language" at the efforts of *mestizo* and indigenous writers – whose first language was not Castilian – to penetrate the formidable walls of the Castilian "lettered city."

It might seem that the creoles would be immune to this type of criticism; however, peninsular scorn of the creoles also included underhanded criticism of the creoles' use of the mother tongue. Not only were the creoles subject to accusations of idolatry based upon possible traces of indigenous blood or practices; they were also ridiculed for the expressive variation which increasingly differentiated their speech from Castilian Spanish, as well as from the Andalusian, Extremaduran, and Canary Island variants spoken by their parents and grandparents. The fact was that, after several generations, the Spanish of the creoles had grown somewhat different from its peninsular counterpart, both in terms of prosody and the variety of semantic fields. The result was an incipient form of what has been called "American Spanish" (clearly an overgeneralization, given the regional diversity that exists between and even within the Spanish-speaking countries of Latin America). Even admitting some regional variation, the Spanish of the New World inhabitants of European descent privileged tonalities, vocabulary, and verbal strategies that eventually led some New World authors to enthrone it as the most perfect variant of Castilian in the entire Empire (see Balbuena 1604: 111^{v}; Cárdenas 1945: 176^{v}–177^{r}).

The creoles' use of the language, at least in the privileged sphere of the written word, included certain discursive modalities that may have indirectly transcribed subtle verbal markers of Americanness. Although the notion may sound like much too bold a strategy for the creoles of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries (a century later, we would expect the inclusion of such markers), it begins to make sense from the perspective of the historical context of early vice-regal Spanish America and the specific objectives which drove the production of creole texts at that time.

Equally imperative is the task of venturing beyond questions of intertextuality and interdiscursivity to consider the importance of the relationship between the production of "elite epic" in the New World and the popular culture of the period with its masks, parades, carnivals, and graphic religious representations – all of indigenous,

African, *mestizo*, or decidedly hybrid origin. It is possible to trace this relationship in the works of some seventeenth-century creole writers, including, most prominently, Fernando de Valverde (whose *Santuario de Nuestra Señora de Copacabana* must be defined by more than just its resonance with Góngora and Calderón) and Pedro de Peralta (whose *Lima fundada* was the product of multiple sources and cannot be limited to its evident affinities with Virgil's *Aeneid* or the Inca Garcilaso's *Historia general del Perú*).

What needs underscoring is that much of the dialogism of this New World epic production created transatlantic linkages (based on textual sources, the origins of some authors, the language system used, etc.) at the same time that it forged bridges with Mexican and Andean traditions (based on the symbolic accommodation of the indigenous and African populations and the selective appropriation of some of their cultural manifestations). I would argue that the doubled, hinged nature of this corpus of New World writings was a crucial component of the overall development of creole discourse. In the case of Peru, it played a major role in forging one of the most deeply rooted and expansive collective identities to emerge from the Andean region from the sixteenth century to the present day. "The epic . . . has a peculiar and complex connection to national and local cultures: the inclusiveness of epic – the tendency of a given poem to present an encyclopedic account of the culture that produced it – also explains its political potency" (Beissinger, Tylus, and Wofford 1999: 2). This quotation suggests the necessity of understanding pre-Enlightenment notions of nationhood if we are to fully appreciate the nature and role of epic writing in sixteenth and seventeenth century Spanish America.

For the modern period, Benedict Anderson (1983) has argued that nationalism was a cultural artifact developed by Europe's enlightened bourgeoisies through print and travel narratives. For the purposes of this essay, however, we must read Anderson's well-known and influential work in conjunction with works by scholars who deal directly with those forms of collective identity that emerged long before the dawning of the "Enlightened Century."

For example, in *Nations before Nationalism*, John Armstrong looks at the recent phenomenon of nationalist movements whose claims stem from a long trajectory of human association, but whose longstanding group identity was never legitimated through a formal political structure. Armstrong argues that in such cases "an extended temporal perspective is especially important as a means of perceiving modern nationalism as part of a cycle of ethnic consciousness." In modern nationalism, Armstrong continues, ethnicity is manifested through the search for "permanent 'essences' of national character instead of recognizing the fundamental but shifting significance of boundaries of human identity" (Armstrong 1982: 4). To bolster his argument, Armstrong points to the important work of Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth, who based his model of social interaction not upon a group's fixed character or "essence," but upon the perceptions of a group's members *vis-à-vis* other groups. In other words, Barth's model insists upon the idea of a relational identity (for more on this idea from a Latin American perspective, see Cornejo Polar 1994: 89). The great

advantage of a model like Barth's, which privileges the borders of identity over its internal essences, is that it defines ethnicity by its borders and not as a fixed notion of content. For according to Barth, any element of cultural or biological content is always contingent, and may be altered as long as groups maintain the mechanisms of exclusion with respect to other groups. Barth also argues that, while a group's identity borders may have territorial counterparts, it is not these landed boundaries that define the group's character. In early forms of ethnic nationhood, Barth concludes, group identity was a function of the exclusion of, and opposition to, other human groups.

If collective identities are constructed from changing social interactions, then the elite of a particular society can find ways to exercise hegemony over the non-elite, especially in the absence of a counter-elite who could legitimate the features of an alternative group identity. In the case of the Peruvian Viceroyalty, the creole elite of Lima managed to exercise exclusive and enormous influence over the non-elite creole sectors, while at the same time, in the highland region of Cuzco, a rearticulated, neo-Inca elite enjoyed a similar hegemonic position *vis-à-vis* the indigenous *campesinos*, a position, nonetheless, still subaltern within the general colonial hierarchy. Armstrong argues that even when collectivities show no "consideration of an autonomous political structure" (Armstrong 1982: 8), as was the case with the creole and neo-Incan elites of seventeenth-century vice-regal Peru, ethnic identification can and does occur. In fact, in the case of Peru, the very strength of these two ethnic identifications helps to explain the problem of "national duality" that Peruvian governments have faced ever since the republican period.

Although there is nothing predetermined about the borders of a particular ethnic collectivity, these borders do seem less permeable than those separating different social classes. Because the communication of ethnic symbols occurs over the *longue durée* (i.e., between the living and the long-since dead), the use of particular symbols – both verbal and non-verbal – contributes to the formation of a mythical structure. Armstrong refers to this process of symbolic formation as the "mythomoteur" within which identity comes to be defined in relation to a specific civic association or organized community. In this process, the epic poet, as the narrator of myths, reaffirms the collectivity's "common fate" and internal solidarity *vis-à-vis* any and all outside forces (Armstrong 1982: 9–10). Armstrong's work does not refer specifically to the history of nationhood in the Americas, but many of his ideas about the formation of pre-Enlightenment nationalities could be applied to the case of the Spanish American creoles. By the end of the sixteenth century, a creole discourse of ethnic vindication had certainly emerged within the Viceroyalties; a discourse which exalted the characteristics of the New World "patria" (in the regional and urban sense that the term implied at that time) and boasted of the biological, intellectual, and religious superiority of the honorable descendants of the original conquerors. This creole discourse acted as a counterweight to the economic and administrative hegemony of the resident peninsular Spaniards. It was also a response to the scornful condemnations by *gachupín/chapetón* officials, who justified peninsular hegemony by

claiming that creoles lacked the necessary moral and spiritual qualities to effectively administer any public office, *encomienda*, or *corregimiento*.

Although the conflict between peninsular Spaniards and creoles might appear to be a simple interfamilial dispute, it came to constitute an entire form of group identity for the creoles. We can best understand the nature of this group identity in terms of the categories established by A.D. Smith. As noted earlier, and as Smith also argues, ethnic aristocracies tend to evolve over the *longue durée* through the preservation of their own sense of common ancestry and the gradual incorporation of other sectors of the population into their domain. The latter strategy is especially important to ethnic aristocracies who do not enjoy absolute hegemony within a particular society (as was the case with the creoles). Smith refers to such non-hegemonic ethnic aristocracies as "lateral ethnicities" (Smith 1994: 147).

As historical examples of lateral ethnicities, Smith offers the cases of Spain, England, and France. In Spain, the central component of the Castilian aristocracy's success in creating internal social cohesion was the expulsion of the Moors and the Jews. Smith points out that the Castilian aristocracy used its administrative apparatus to incorporate other social sectors, establishing religious unity and purity of blood as the unifying elements of the ethnic identity. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, according to Smith, regional ethnicities became more evident within Spain. England, for its part, witnessed gradual ethnic unification through an alliance of its aristocrats in the centuries leading up to the Industrial Revolution. In this case, "the ethnic elements of the nation . . . were well developed. By the fourteenth century or slightly later, a common sense and myth of descent . . . were widely current . . . Similarly, a sense of common culture based on language and ecclesiastical organization had emerged." The myth of a common ascendancy is critical to the development and fortification of a lateral ethnicity. In terms of France, Smith acknowledges the many debates surrounding the nature of "feudalism" under the monarchy, but argues finally that an ethnic aristocracy which was "French" in origin did succeed – despite its many vicissitudes – in establishing a relatively efficient administrative hold over central and northern France (and much later, over the south). It was then able to consolidate such "civic" elements as a well-defined territory, a unified economy, and linguistic and legal standardization. Beginning in the seventeenth century and up to the present time, these elements formed the basis for definitions of the French nation (Smith 1994: 148–50).

For Smith, then, Spain, England, and France all serve as basic models of aristocratic lateral ethnicities whose success can be traced to the bureaucratic incorporation of different social strata through the fundamental institution of the state. However, as Smith insists, the basis for the modern nation-state was always an ethnic group, and not vice versa, "a relatively homogeneous ethnic core" and "the sense of ancestry and identity the people possess" (ibid: 151). It was the sense of identity, based upon a common ancestral tradition – even if a basically symbolic one – that allowed the three aforementioned nation-states with their deeply rooted ethnic origins to develop the necessary forms of state administration to assure their hegemony in the centuries leading up to the triumph of the Enlightenment.

In the Peruvian case, the notion of a lateral ethnicity applied to this relatively late-appearing ethnic formation in comparison to the emergence of the dominant peninsular Spaniards. As the decades and centuries passed, the creoles of Peru would have to spend as much time positioning themselves internally *vis-à-vis* the descendants of the Incas, as they would externally *vis-à-vis* the peninsular Spaniards. From the crucible of this long dispute, which involved multiple alliances and negotiations, especially with the peninsular Spaniards, would emerge, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, a creole-led administrative formation. By then, the creoles would actively seek to assimilate the other sectors of the Peruvian population into one, single, transregional project while maintaining their blatant political and economic hegemony within the republic. This political formation, as we know, owed much to the literal decapitation of the indigenous neo-Incan elite in the bloody suppression of the Great Rebellion of Tupac Amaru II in 1781 (see Rowe 1976; Méndez 1995).

In the Mexican case, the absence of an indigenous lineage which could clearly trace its descent from the surviving Aztec nobility allowed creoles like Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora to proclaim themselves the "spiritual" heirs of the ancient indigenous governors and of their model of virtuous government (see his 1680 *Theatro de virtudes políticas*). A century later, Francisco Javier Clavijero would perform this appropriation of indigenous cultural tradition to establish the authority of his own voice and to defend the grandeur of the American cultures against the attacks of such Enlightenment critics as Cornelius de Pauw and the Count de Buffon. Gerbi (1993) presents an important reading of this celebrated polemic.

Obviously, there are significant differences between the paradigmatic cases of France, England, and Spain and the experience of the peripheral societies of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Mexico and Peru. It may even seem forced to use a term like "Peruvian society" or "Mexican society" to describe the realities of those times. Nonetheless, in the case of Peru at least, the term was used both in the broad geographic sense (of referring to a territorial continuity with the Inca Empire) and in the limited demographic sense of equating creoles with "Peruvians" while relegating the rest of the population to either the universe of castes or the *república de indios*. In other words, to be "Peruvian" at that time was not something defined by one's birth in the territory of the Viceroyalty of Peru, but rather by the particular form of belonging to the *república de españoles* that such a birth implied. In this sense, we must understand the meaning of "Peruvian" as defined in that era in relation to the term "nation." Arzáns y Vela, for example, writing in the early eighteenth century, equates the terms "Peruvian" and "creole" in positing his view of the contrast between this "nation" and the other Spanish "nations," including the "Basques," "Catalans," "Andalusians," etc. This argument appears in the *Historia de la Villa Imperial de Potosí* as Arzáns y Vela offers an account of the disputes that existed between the different "nations" populating the city of Potosí in the seventeenth century (Arzáns 1965 II: 213).

Based upon the examination of many other historical documents from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, contemporary historians also refer to the notion of a

"creole nation" in the pre-Enlightenment sense of the term. Anthony Pagden, for example, notes that "by the middle of the seventeenth century this [creole] nation had established its own cultural and . . . political identity," as well as a clear sense of its difference from other Spanish "nations." For the first generations after the Conquest, the creoles voiced their search for social and political recognition as well as their demands for access to lucrative administrative posts through appeals to the honor and bravery of their conquering ancestors. As the generations passed, however, creoles would come to base their petitions and demands on belonging to the land and on the superior quality of services they believed they could lend to the Crown (Pagden 1987: 91, 61–2). At the same time, creoles did not claim that everyone belonging to that land should have the same rights. As mentioned earlier, and although it may seem paradoxical today, they did not consider the other "nations" of peoples born in Peru (i.e., those of indigenous and African origin) "Peruvians" (and would not until the nineteenth century).

The multi-stratified nature of this blatant racial and symbolic hierarchy resonated well with the ancient Castilian obsession with "purity of blood," even though the actual blurring of the boundaries of group identity was as evident then as it is from today's historical perspective. In yet another insightful essay discussing theoretical approaches to the processes of nation formation, A. D. Smith refers to the two opposing extremes as the "geological" vs. the "gastronomical" approaches. According to Smith, the "geological" or primordialist approach assigns permanence and durability to a preexisting ancestral "stratum" of ethnic content, and it is this preexisting ethnic stratum which continuously permeates the new social formations that give rise to the nation-state. In contrast, the "gastronomical" or circumstantialist approach assumes a constant fluidity among social subjects; and because groups forge identities through alliances and perspectives informed mainly by contemporary exigencies, social subjects must constantly reinvent themselves through discourse (Smith 2000: 193–4).

In certain cases, the establishment alone of cultural icons and a corresponding canonic literature has fostered the emergence of an imagined community (on a much lesser scale, of course, than the modern nation, which is inter-provincial and inter-regional, sometimes embracing linguistic, ethnic, and racial pluralities, and even different historical periods). The small, imagined communities of honorable creoles in vice-regal Peru and Mexico would fall within this category of communities defined by Smith as being forged partially and dialectally through a group of canonic literary texts (ibid: 188). Naturally, in such cases, one must work with a notion of literature wide enough to encompass a whole range of writings; after all, literature in the limited, modern sense is largely a late eighteenth-century notion, derived from and grounded in Romanticist texts from Herder to Madame de Staël to the Schlegel brothers. In addition, one must be ever mindful that the creole communities of Spanish America who used the written word to imagine their particular place and posit their internal homogeneity did so from within the vice-regal social complex and always had to compete and negotiate with other groups of a no less ethnic character.

Although this early form of creole nationhood should not be equated with the subsequent, post-Enlightenment phenomenon known today as Peruvian or Mexican nationalism, there is some continuity between the two. Discursive strategies and focalization of auto-references helped to maintain a certain coherence of group identity over time and suggests the presence of an explicit and trans-generational project. This creole project has its own "mythomoteur" and has been articulated through the use of the written word, in a discourse with its own peculiar modalities; modalities whose variations with respect to the dominant peninsular model are not always immediately evident.

The work of Paul R. Brass is especially relevant here because it attempts to bring together both the primordialist and circumstantialist approaches to the study of how political structures emerge from ethnic groups. In addition to positing the centrality of a common language, an extended kinship line, and one or more foundational personages to the formation of collective identities, Brass emphasizes the important role of the construction of race and racial exclusion (Brass 1979: 35). Along with the circumstantialists, Brass insists that many aspects of ethnic identity are changeable and subject to manipulation by elites. This point is especially important in coming to a richer understanding of the contours of creole discourse, for the Spanish Empire as a whole was characterized by the constant competitive exaltation of each individual kingdom within the political system. And while there were obviously many differences between the metropolitan kingdom of Castile and its viceroyalties in the East and West, there were also important parallels. Just like the descendants of the royal lineages of Castile, the descendants of the original conquerors of Mexico and Peru developed a wide range of rhetorical resources and symbolic tools to help expand the domain of their self-proclaimed superiority.

There are a number of other studies of the nation that one can look to for help in defining the peculiarities of pre-Enlightenment forms of ethnic nationhood. In addition to the aforementioned work by Anderson, there are the insightful works by Kohn (1944), Hobsbawn (1990), Chatterjee (1986, 1993), and Bhabha (1990), to name but a few. Of particular relevance is Bhabha's (1990) argument that narrative sequencing is inherent to all modern discourses of nation formation. Examining this idea from the pre-Enlightenment context of vice-regal Spanish America, it becomes clear that narrative sequencing is also present in New World epic poetry, beginning with its search for origins and genealogies and proceeding forward to the exaltations of the temporal present of the poem. The genre of the elite epic underwent a complex process of re-semanticization as it journeyed and was transplanted to the New World. In its new setting, epic writing was transformed into an instrument for the imagined elaboration of a social group in search of its own, elusive identity. As I have argued elsewhere, we can follow this process in both the Peruvian and Mexican cases. In Mexico, for example, a collective subjectivity becomes visible through the formulation – and reformulation – of the epic genre in texts by Francisco de Terrazas and Antonio de Saavedra Guzmán (see Mazzotti 2000). We can read the parenthetical inscriptions by these Mexican creoles regarding their precarious situation within the

Viceroyalty as forming part of the multiple and varied registers that Beissinger, Tylus and Wofford (1999: 3) have identified as possible in epic writing. The creoles were able to take advantage of this expressive possibility, framing their writing practice in the most prestigious of genres in order to achieve – if not an immediate political reaction from their peninsular readers – at least the release of their own intense sense of melancholy.

At the same time, epic writings in Spanish America had evident affiliations with their Mediterranean models, especially in terms of linguistics, rhetoric, circulation, and other substantive components of the genre. Indeed, they could hardly ignore the examples set by their Iberian and Italian homologues. Creole writers responded to the models of Virgil's *Aeneid*, Lucan's *Pharsalia*, Matteo Maria Boidardo's *Orlando innamorato* (1495), and Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (1516) in the *Arauco domado* (1596) of Pedro de Oña, the *Bernardo o Victoria de Roncesvalles* (1624) of Bernardo de Balbuena, and the *Lima fundada o Conquista del Perú* (1732) of Pedro de Peralta. However, even in the case of Ercilla's *La Araucana* – so often considered by critics to be the first complete example of a Renaissance epic with an American theme – there were evident variations from its European models, including the absence of a lone individual hero. Other variations include Peralta's feminization of Incan history, which he accomplished through the strategic manipulation of images of indigenous masks and ancestral parades, as well as through the use of texts by Fray Buenaventura de Salinas and the Inca Garcilaso (especially the second part of the *Comentarios Reales* or *Historia general del Perú*). It is true that their American counterparts preserved many of the internal aspects and rhetorical strategies of the Renaissance and baroque epic poems of Europe. I would argue, however, that there are many examples of epic writing from the Spanish American context which introduced multiple variants charged with new meanings. Ultimately, these New World writings infused the Old World genre of epic with a renovated prestige and broader scope, extending solid bridges of mutual communication and doubled meanings between Spain and its American viceroyalties.

For a creole poet of the seventeenth century, moreover, any chance of ascending the social and administrative ladders of vice-regal power depended upon procuring the favor of a powerful patron; and they could achieve such favor only by presenting poetic productions wrapped in prestigious garb which fulfilled the formal and argumentative expectations of the time. This was certainly true for Pedro de Oña, as it was for various other educated creole authors of Peru who managed to receive the favor of a viceroy, be it don García Hurtado de Mendoza, Don Juan de Mendoza y Luna (Marquis of Montesclaros), or the Count of Chinchón. Oña dedicated each of his three works – *Arauco domado* (1596), *Temblor de Lima* (1609), and *Vasauro* (1635) – to one of those Peruvian viceroys. Likewise, Diego de Hojeda dedicated *La Christiada* (1611) to the Marquis de Montesclaros. Motive sufficed among the creole and creole-inspired bards of the seventeenth century to cultivate the much-appreciated art of *imitatio*.

By that time, the sixteenth-century tendency of New World writings to center on the defense of the Indians and the condemnation of the conqueror-*encomenderos* had

largely disappeared. The accusatory eloquence of Las Casas had given way, in the succeeding generations, to Acosta's scholasticism and to the Inca Garcilaso's vindication of *mestizos* and conqueror-*encomenderos*. Writers like Oña, Salinas, and Peralta replaced Ercilla's violent dismissal of the *encomenderos* with exaltations of those same *encomenderos*. The infamous Viceroy Toledo was gone, succeeded by the more sympathetic figures of Hurtado de Mendoza and the Marquis of Montesclaros. As generations passed, the descendants of the conquerors learned to adapt to the vice-regal system through a series of negotiations that would permit them to enjoy certain privileges, such as access to some of the lesser positions within the vice-regal army and the network of *corregimientos*.

Among these negotiations was the transformation of the complaints and solicitousness of sixteenth-century writings into the grand exaltations of the local "patria" that characterized seventeenth-century writings. The innovative marvel of Balbuena's *Grandeza mexicana* (1604), with its verbal exuberance and its capacity "to codify in the discourse" the universality of New Spain's capital city, would find its contemporary counterpart in Peru in certain chronicle-style writings (such as those by Salinas, Calancha, and Cobo) and paratextual works (such as laudatory poems), and subsequently in Rodrigo de Valdés' *Fundación y grandezas de Lima* (1687) and the subsequent epic writings of Peralta.

Since most of these texts appeared in the seventeenth century, it is important to pay special attention to the configuration of the creole voice emerging in the Peruvian Viceroyalty even earlier than this. I refer here to the case of Pedro de Oña, whose *Arauco domado* (1596) articulated a series of perspectives that reveal an intermittent ambiguity in its focalization of the vice-regal administration. This is particularly apparent in the poem's presentation of the institution of *encomienda* and in its treatment of the creole rebels who rose up against the Crown in Quito in 1592–3. At the same time, the detailing of information about native rituals in the Araucanía region lent more authority to the author's creole voice. In this early poem by Oña, one is able to discern how the creole perspective appropriates and reworks certain traditional topics within the genre of the European epic, managing thereby to intermittently – and in a veiled manner – posit a fractured and melancholic focalization of Spanish imperial administration.

Other creole bards and chroniclers also exalted their native City of Kings in works that paralleled the gestures of their Mexican and peninsular counterparts. In this sense, scholars need to revisit the Academia Antártica, the "Discurso en loor de la poesía," the epistle entitled "Amarilis a Belardo," and the figure of Saint Rose in light of the elements of each that attempt to position Lima (or Peru in general) as the very center of Western civilization (see chapter 16, this volume). In the Mexican case, the aforementioned *Grandeza mexicana* by Balbuena and the *Canto intitulado Mercurio* by Arias Villalobos offer clear evidence of how creoles exalted their "patria" as the new, civilizing core of the West. This exaltation came in two variants: while Balbuena's work ignored the role of the conquerors and focused his praise on the commercial and architectonic vigor of the Mexican capital, Arias Villalobos firmly grounded Mexico's

superiority in the heroism of the conquering ancestors. In Peru, a semantic slippage characterized creole exaltations that begins with the origins of the El Dorado legend, moves to an identification of the entire Peruvian territory as a mineralogical arcadia, and from there to the spiritual superiority of the creoles. It is the establishment of this longstanding and far-reaching paradigm in Peruvian vice-regal discursive production that helps to define the contours of creole ethnic nationhood and to foster a deeper understanding of the development of the trans-generational subjectivity of creolism in Peru.

In much the same way, scholars need to take a closer look at the examples of epic writing from Lima and Mexico City which narrate the heroic actions of New World soldiers defending their territories from British and Dutch pirates and corsairs. Of utmost importance in these accounts is the way in which the actions of the defending soldiers become a vehicle for the whitening of creole heroism. In general terms, such works by Oña, Miramontes, and Peralta present the military actions in a manner that better accommodates creoles on top of the social pyramid. They accomplish this accommodation through the selective and self-interested use of topics from the classical and Renaissance traditions.

In the realm of religious epic writing, there are certain mystical works from the "colonial" corpus that deserve more attention. One of these is the *Santuario de Nuestra Señora de Copacabana* (1641) by the Peruvian creole and Augustinian friar Fernando de Valverde. Although this long epic-pastoral poem was modeled after the works of Góngora and Calderón, it also provided a space for the recounting of certain indigenous myths from the Colla region of Lake Titicaca. The creole writer transformed and adapted these myths to a creole agenda through the medium of sacred poetry. Equally representative of this kind of religious epic writing is the *Primavera indiana* by Sigüenza y Góngora, which exalted the figure of the Virgin of Guadalupe as the symbol of Mexican identity (as defined by the creole elite, of course).

Some decades after Balbuena's exaltation of Mexico as the civilizing metropolis, the Peruvian creole Jesuit Rodrigo de Valdés wrote the influential *Fundacion y Grandezas de Lima* (1687). This work constitutes a rare example of a Latin-Hispanic epic poetry which transformed the written word into a hybrid between the language of Virgil and that of Góngora, and which did so as part of the effort to establish the superiority of Lima *vis-à-vis* all the other cities of the Spanish Empire. Perhaps more than any other text within Lima's expansive corpus of seventeenth-century epic writings, this epic poem represents the aspirations of a mature creolism. In this sense, one could envision Valdés' text as a bridge of sorts between the initial impulses of chroniclers like Buenaventura de Salinas and the later, eighteenth-century expression of creole discourse appearing in the works of Pedro de Peralta.

Turning finally to the great "Doctor Océano," as the Peruvian savant Don Pedro de Peralta y Barnuevo was known to his peers, we can trace the genesis of his monumental epic poem *Lima fundada o Conquista del Peru* (1732) both to the insightful readings performed by this erudite *limeño* of the ancient chronicles dealing with the Incan Empire, and to his own observations of the popular vice-regal festivals that had

significant indigenous participation. As such, the most notable aspect of Peralta's well-known, if overly neglected, epic poem is its constitution of a discourse of specific, local characteristics which, at one and the same time, stood as a variant of the immense corpus of elite epic writings in Castilian and also formed part of the often-problematic dialogue between that elite European genre and the social and cultural complexity of its own specific context.

By way of conclusion, then, I would argue that a textual analysis of many New World epic poems shows that ideas about creoles, epic, and ethnic nationhood were mutually constructed and nearly always articulated – albeit in a veiled fashion – in relation to the other social subjects of the Viceroyalties. For this reason, Cornejo Polar's (1994) notion of "relational identity" can serve as one of the basic tenets for understanding the forms of collective identity that arose in Spanish America during the centuries in question here. The notion recognizes and insists upon the particularities of early American identities, including the profound religiosity of the speaking subjects in the pre-Enlightenment period and the fact that these societies were not exactly "colonial" in their organization, but vice-regal. At the same time, even this most valuable of contributions from the field of Latin American cultural theory can be enriched through dialogue with other theories emanating from the study of experiences which were, strictly speaking, colonial (i.e., Africa and Asia); theories which have come to form the basis of the postcolonial field. In this sense, a comprehensive and detailed study of the corpus of texts in the genre of the Spanish American epic would necessarily take an interdisciplinary approach and use interdisciplinary methods, combining an examination of the particularities of this neglected genre as it emerged within the Andean and Mexican territories with a broader theoretical contextualization through reference to the latest currents of thought within North Atlantic academia on questions both colonial and postcolonial. It would, in fact, insist upon the fundamental importance of this sector not only to the literary history of the region, but also to a reconceptualization of the nationalities of Hispanic origin in the Americas in light of their approximations to – and distancing from – the dominant European models.

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29

Plainness and Paradox: Colonial Tensions in the Early New England Religious Lyric

Amy M. E. Morris

For the Puritan colonists who migrated to New England, their change of place was both a geographical translation and an act of religious devotion. While economic reasons were also central, the colonial project was clothed in religious rhetoric of seeking to establish a purified church and society: an earthly Zion. Pondering the question "What's colonial about colonial America?" Michael Warner has argued that colonial culture is not defined by a shared "will to dominate" and cultural clash between settlers and indigenes, but is at bottom "a set of spatial and temporal hierarchies" that play out in literary discourse in many varied and indirect ways (Warner 2000: 63). In this essay, I want to examine some of the ways in which the devotional poetry of the seventeenth-century settlers expressed a certain reordering of such hierarchies in light of their migration and settlement in New England, focusing not on their encounters with Indians, but on the extension of their English religious culture into unfamiliar territory. While public rhetoric proclaimed the communal colonial project as simultaneously a new wilderness exile and the foundation of a new Israel, devotional lyrics expressed and informed the more personal, but equally paradoxical dimension of the settlers' religious experience.

The displacement involved in colonial migration gave new nuances to traditional devotional tropes, and obliged poets to resituate the lyric self in response to altered circumstances. Although being colonial involved being provincial, Puritans were well placed theologically to find in this situation of worldly exile an opportunity for a spiritual refocusing that could potentially counteract their cultural loss. Distance and exile were theologically definitive of the Puritan self: Calvin, rehearsing a theme that Bunyan would make famous, taught that because all humans were "placed at a great distance from perfection, we must always be endeavouring to make some progress" (Calvin 1989: 3.3.14). The spiritual quest of the Elect was often translated in Puritan texts on both sides of the Atlantic into images of travel and of spiritual distance to be

overcome through grace. This yearning for spiritual progression was reflected in Anne Bradstreet's poetry, in images of the migration of fish, birds, and rivers which emblematized the poet's own physical and spiritual journeys.

In addition to experiences of migration, colonial Puritan poets also shared the experience of living under the ministry of the local Congregational churches. New England ministers promoted colloquial styles of worship and preaching at a time when, elsewhere, courtly, Catholic, and high Anglican tastes favored baroque ritualism and mystical complexity in religious art. That the colonial church context exerted a significant influence on the kinds of poetry produced is apparent if one compares, for example, the ceremonial songs written for church performance by the Mexican nun Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, with the more personal and meditative religious lyrics produced by Anne Bradstreet and Edward Taylor. While Sor Juana was commissioned to write *loas* and *autos* (sacred dramas), and *villancicos* (song cyles) for performance in the cathedrals of New Spain, in the churches of Puritan New England only Bibles and psalters were allowed. All other written liturgy was considered idolatrous (Davies 1990: 39–40) and the idea of theatrical performance, whether sacred or profane, treated with contempt.

As a result, the development of religious lyric in New England was largely as a form of private meditative expression, based largely on life experience as in Bradstreet's lyrics, or on scripture readings as in Taylor's *Meditations*. Alternatively, inspired by the dominance of the pulpit in Puritan worship, lyric forms were adapted to sermonic functions, as in Michael Wigglesworth's verse and many popular funeral elegies. If Puritan belief and early colonial circumstances tended to coincide in the promotion of plainness and an awareness of meaningful dislocation, there was however no escape from paradox. Since spiritual recentering had to be achieved through a sense of distance, and unworldliness through settlement, colonial circumstances often intensified religious dialectic and inversions of earthly values in lyric expression: Bradstreet's lyrics use images of empire, for instance, while Taylor's indulge in ritual parody.

Bradstreet and Taylor migrated to the New World as adults. Their relocation to the New England frontier involved a measure of literary impoverishment that could not but inform the development of their lyric styles. In England, Bradstreet had had access (through her father) to the Earl of Lincoln's library. The Bradstreets' own library, lost in a house fire in 1666, was unusually large for its context, containing 800 books, while Taylor's Westfield library contained 220 volumes. Sor Juana is estimated to have owned 1,500–4,000 books. By comparison to Sor Juana's Mexico, colonial New England was a fairly primitive settlement, lacking the hierarchy, wealth, and cultural focus provided by the vice-regal court. New England readers were, materially speaking, in a comparable situation to people in remote provinces of England (Wright 1920: 61): the imports of local booksellers and the occasional personal visit gave them access to the London book market, and correspondence shows that books were shared among friends. How far this extended to poetry, which was a relatively minor genre, is not known, but there is evidence that English

religious poetry was read and admired by colonial writers: Bradstreet shows familiarity with the poems of Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, and Joshua Sylvester; Increase Mather owned copies of George Herbert's poetry, and Herbert is explicitly cited by Jonathan Mitchel, Philip Pain, John Danforth, Joshua Scottow, and Cotton Mather (Shawcross 1988); Francis Quarles sent John Cotton some verses (now lost) as a contribution to the Bay Psalm Book, and Abraham Cowley's works reached Harvard College Library by 1723.

But while English poetic models were to a certain extent available to New England writers, the large metropolitan market and the cultural infrastructure that nurtured devotional verse in England were less available, and in some ways, less appropriate: New England readers may have enjoyed Herbert's poetry, but the Anglican ritualism that informed it was banished from their Congregational church services. And whereas Spain extended her court and patronage system in an attempt to encompass and subdue her overseas dominions, New England Puritans needed to keep court and Crown at a safe distance in order to protect their religious autonomy. Such a situation gave no opportunity for a New England poet to benefit from noble patrons as did Cowley, who served as Queen Henrietta Maria's secretary, and Sor Juana, whose works were promoted through her Spanish patron, the Countess de Paredes, wife of a former viceregent. As late as the 1770s, Phillis Wheatley, already well-known in Boston, took her poems to London to find an aristocratic patron and a market, so it is hardly surprising that the first book of verse by a New England author, Anne Bradstreet's *Tenth Muse*, was published in London in 1650. The second, expanded edition was, however, successfully published in Boston in 1678.

The title page of Bradstreet's work, and its preface by her brother-in-law, John Woodbridge, present *The Tenth Muse* to the English market as a kind of imported, exotic novelty, which illustrates the early sense of distinct identity felt in the colonies with regard to their literary production. Although Sor Juana's work was similarly marketed as culturally exotic (she was also described as "the tenth muse"), Sor Juana worked to strengthen Mexico's connection to the imperial center as a political maneuver, for instance by eulogizing her patron's Mexican-born son as a fusion of Spanish and Mexican identity. Bradstreet, on the other hand, emphasized New England's distinct and autonomous identity as Old England's adult daughter, in her "Dialogue between Old England and New," and even gave her religious superiority and the advisory role within the relationship. Although New England culture was in some ways comparable to that of provincial England, the colony's religious identity and idealism made it much more self-consciously autonomous: its culture not only emulated but also attempted to rival that of the metropole. There's no better evidence of this competitive imitation than the publication of the Bay Psalm Book in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1640. While being technically the first collection of religious lyrics published in New England, the Bay Psalm Book was more than a piece of occasional liturgy in the vein of Sor Juana's commissions. It was produced specifically to oust the official Anglican Psalter in the colony's churches.

If New England poets had neither the will nor the resources to produce devotional collections like Herbert's *The Temple* and Vaughan's *Silex Scintillans*, they did publish verse shaped to supply the distinct religious needs of the local audience, and they did read each other's poems: Taylor owned a copy of Bradstreet's *Several Poems* and referred to Wigglesworth's "Doomsday Verses" in his elegy on his first wife, Elizabeth. Whereas the broadside funeral elegy remained the most common form of poetry in seventeenth-century New England, collections of devotional lyrics were published, including Philip Pain's *Daily Meditations* (Cambridge, 1668), Wigglesworth's *Meat Out of the Eater* (Cambridge, 1670), and Roger Wolcott's *Poetical Meditations* (New London, 1725). Elegiac and lyric verse also found its way into treatises and histories, such as Edward Johnson's early history of New England, *Wonder-Working Providence* (1654), and Roger Williams' *A Key into the Language of America* (1643). Finally, as demonstrated by Taylor's 400-page "Poetical Works," many devotional lyrics were also preserved unpublished. Although it is possible that the dynamics of the colonial market may have influenced Taylor's decision not to publish, since his esoteric verse style was far more complex and ritualistic than that of his colonial contemporaries, there is no documentary evidence for his decision. While Taylor's private self-publication of his devotional poetry in a fair copied, hand-bound manuscript may suggest that he was anticipating posthumous publication, it could also imply that by privately imitating the format of print publication he was choosing to put his faith in readership that was neither colonial nor metropolitan, but divine.

If New England's colonial literature was shaped by a reorganization of "spatial" hierarchies that included awareness of the distance from the metropole, and often a counterbalancing sense of responsibility to the local reading community, it was also influenced by shifting hierarchies of inherited and pursued values that can be traced in forms of literary imitation and adaptation. Although New World colonies were by no means exact clones of Old World communities, their identity involved "extension" rather than "otherness." Walter Mignolo has explained this in terms of an "Occidentalist" as opposed to an "Orientalist" model, in that settler colonies in the Americas were authorized inheritors of Old World ideology, according to the traditional belief in the westward march of civilization (Mignolo 2000: 51). This is depicted for instance in Herbert's poem "The Church Militant," to which Cotton Mather alludes at the start of his *Magnalia Christi Americana*, which has the "pilgrim" church standing on "tip-toe in our land, / Readie to passe to the American strand" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 332; Martz 1986: 178, ll. 235–6). Idealistic religious migrants, whose cultural imitation of the Old World additionally involved a kind of triangulation with their otherworldly ideals, were thus faced with the paradox of becoming marginal in relation to English culture, but, in another sense, taking a step towards a religious fulfillment that was predicted in their European ideology. Although Taylor felt culturally isolated on the western frontier of Massachusetts, he was in no doubt that those who countered such physical dislocation by becoming communicant members of his congregation more than compensated for their earthly marginalization. As he put it in the final, joyous song of *Gods Determinations*, such people

should regard themselves as safely "encoacht for Heaven" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 312).

In the longer-established colonies of New Spain, writers turned the increased distance from European and classical sources into an opportunity for baroque experimentation, generic adaptation, and parody (Echevarría 1996). In her *loa* for *The Divine Narcissus*, Sor Juana highlights parallels between Aztec fertility rituals and the Catholic Mass. The *loa* begins with "Religion" and "Zeal," dressed as a Spanish couple, interrupting "Occident" and "America," dressed as Indians, in their ceremony in praise of the "all-powerful God of Seeds," in which cakes of seeds mixed with human blood are eaten. After a dialogue darkly parodic of the "civilizing" conquest of the natives by Religion and Zeal, the four characters begin to understand one another and end singing in unison, "Blessed the day I came to know the great God of the Seeds!" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 152–60). Like in Roger Williams' poems (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 272, 276), the Indian characters in the *loa* are in some ways more Christian than the Christians: they love the land more than gold, and see the Europeans as mad and barbaric. Religious rituals and ideas of barbarism are thus portrayed as mutual reflections, distorted parodies of each other, leaving a certain doubt about just how "central" European Christianity can really be to a colonial faith.

In seventeenth-century Puritan Massachusetts, however, distance from England did not lead to much experimental hybridity or reflection on cultural relativity, but was treated instead as a precious opportunity to purify religious *imitatio* from traditional cultural interference. Wigglesworth, for instance, in "A Prayer to Christ," at the start of his successful poem *The Day of Doom*, denounced the literary convention of invoking the Muses (Wigglesworth 1989: 9). In this and his later collection, *Meat Out of the Eater*, Wigglesworth evidently relished the chance to write devotional verse in a colloquial, direct, and non-allusive style for an appreciative local Puritan audience. His literary self-consciousness was paralleled in the minister Thomas Hooker's defense of his own "wilderness" style in the preface to his *Survey of the Summe of Church-Discipline*, published in London: "That the discourse comes forth in such a homely dresse and course habit, the Reader must be desired to consider, It comes *out of the wildernesse*, where curiosity is not studied" (Hooker 1648: Sig. a4^{v}). Whether Puritan or Catholic, being colonial gave writers a heightened literary self-consciousness and an awareness of the centrality of metropolitan conventions in every departure from them.

Most seventeenth-century Puritan religious lyrics lacked the kind of exciting cultural hybridity that postcolonial critics have come to appreciate in colonial Spanish literature. Even Roger Williams' poems pale in comparison with Sor Juana's *villancicos*, with their smattering of Afro-Spanish and even Nahuatl (Cruz 1988: 124–9). But Puritan poets' use of biblical intertextuality can be viewed itself as a conventionalized kind of hybridity, insofar as it simultaneously affirmed the engrafting of the colonial lyric voice within a European (and ultimately Eastern) tradition of Christian story, while maintaining a resistant distinctness in its application to local, colonial circumstances. Barbara Lewalski has identified the meditative elaboration of biblical imagery and language as the theological and aesthetic core of seventeenth-century Protestant

poetics (Lewalski 1979) and the colonial setting added a further dimension. Biblical intertextuality and typological interpretation, which some scholars have considered definitive of New England Puritan poetics (Scheick 1992), could give the religious lyric an authority and resonance that enabled time and space to be transcended – a particularly useful tool for the geographically decentered colonial poet.

In this respect, biblical intertextuality played a comparable role for Puritan colonial poets to that of liturgical and eucharistic performance in Sor Juana's writing: in both cases, the presence of the divine Word forms a suggestive religious "center" within the colonial "periphery." But whereas Sor Juana dramatized a concern that her *loas* should be performable in Madrid, "the Center of our Holy Faith," and reminded her audience that "men of reason realize/there is no distance that deters" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 159), Puritan lyrics were less overtly concerned with trying to interweave colonial spirituality with its metropolitan counterpart. In Puritan religious lyrics, the text of the Bible, albeit often the King James Version, became a means of ostensibly bypassing fallible human history and politics, and reaching instead for eternal meanings.

Puritan poets inherited from the Reformation an Augustinian view of language's dual capacity, namely that it was fallible when referring to transient, earthly things, but "eternal when serving as a medium of truth" (Scheick 1992: 22). As such, lyrical meditation that knitted up the distance between the colonial, provincialized self and the eternal truth of scripture could compensate for any geographical dislocation. Indeed, that dislocation could provide a lively foil to the spiritual "centeredness" of the biblically intertextual voice. This is illustrated in John Cotton's autobiographical poem "A Thankful Acknowledgement of God's Providence" (Meserole 1985: 383). Although the poem surveys the author's transatlantic ministerial career, which had numerous ups and downs, it emphasizes that the dislocation Cotton experienced, far from being a deviation, marked an ultimately harmonious spiritual journey towards his "Heav'n on Earth." The first couplet suggests travels about to begin, as Cotton reminds God, "From the womb thou didst me safely take," but then goes on: "From breast thou hast me nurst my life throughout, / That I may say I never wanted ought." This sudden emphasis on static, unwavering proximity to God contrasts with the key biographical dislocation Cotton experienced when he moved to New England in 1633, under threat of persecution.

In the rest of the poem Cotton continues to develop two levels, spiritual and literal, that intertwine, sometimes as parallels and sometimes as antitheses, but that reflect in their doubleness of vision the doubleness of Cotton's transatlantic experience. Biblical intertextuality and the dual perspective of being a colonial migrant mirror and reinforce each other:

> In all my meals my table thou hast spread,
> In all my lodgings thou hast [made my] bed:
> Thou hast me clad with changes of array,
> And chang'd my house for better far away.

In this stanza, for example, biblical intertextuality occurs in allusions to Psalm 23: 5, which describes how God prepares a table in the presence of the psalmist's enemies, and Psalm 78: 19, which describes the Israelites provoking God's anger by disbelieving that he could "furnish a table in the wilderness" (King James Version). These references situate Cotton's lyric voice as giving thanks, in contradistinction to the ungrateful Israelites, in the symbolic wilderness of New England – both a spiritual and a geographical location. The first allusion also hints at the enmities that had threatened Cotton's career, from his controversial conversion to nonconformity at Cambridge University, to his entanglement in the Antinomian controversy as Anne Hutchinson's pastor in Boston, Massachusetts; but all such specifics are dissolved in the lyric into the broad biblical pattern. The change of clothes and change of house develop the intertextual overtones: the change of clothes evokes the festal garments required for admission to the wedding feast in Christ's parable (Matthew 22: 11–14) and the change of house resonates with the parable of the wise and the foolish builders (Matthew 7) and with Christ's reference to the "many mansions" of his "Father's house" (John 14: 2).

As the allusions suggest, both "changes" strongly imply religious conversion over and above literal provision and transatlantic migration, and this suggestion is clinched by the careful obliquity of "far away," which conflates terrestrial and spiritual changes and makes migration to New England serve as a metaphor for the soul's heavenly journey. Although Cotton's conversion necessarily predated his migration, this lyric elides the key geographical and spiritual journeys of his life, thereby effectively "centering" Cotton's apparent deviation from a successful career at home in England. But Cotton's poem ends on an ambiguous note that brings us back to the semantic uncertainty that biblical intertextuality can also evoke. Returning, with the heavenwards gaze of the aging believer, to the symbolic equation between New England and heaven, Cotton thanks God for the grace and mercy he has known, and claims that such experiences are "the Heav'n on Earth, if any be." Cotton's indirect reference to the concept of New England as a New Zion, as laid out in Winthrop's 1630 sermon "A Model of Christian Charity" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 244–50), carries a note of uncertainty: "if any be." It also subordinates the effort to create a religious utopia on earth to an essentialized spiritual need for divine grace. Does the poem then negate or endorse the colonial project? The lyric form, with its subjective gaze, scriptural metaphor, and prayerful voice evades being pinned down. As a result, the poem situates New England as an ambiguous half-way house between the Old World and heaven. Later, in the poetry of African American slaves, this ambiguity, made possible by lyric conventions that allow physical and religious imagery to be overlaid without qualification, would acquire the tautness of ironic paradox, as in Jupiter Hammon's "An Evening Thought. Salvation by Christ, with Penetential Cries": "Thou hast left the heathen shore, / Thro' mercy of the Lord, / Among the heathen live no more, / Come magnify thy God" (Mulford, Vietto, and Winans 2002: 856, stanza 11).

While earlier European depictions of the New World as a terrestrial Paradise formed the backdrop to the utopian endeavors of the Puritan settlers, the intersection

of worldly and otherworldly goals in Puritan colonization created a particular tension. There is little doubt that Puritanism propelled rather than restrained the economic and social success of New England: Massachusetts-born Benjamin Lynde comfortably conjoined the dual aims in his lines on Thompson's Island: "Our chief concern is that we Heaven attain, / Next that we buy and sell for moderate gain" (Meserole 1985: 492, ll. 49–50). Yet, as Cotton's ambiguity about the spiritual and/or material possibility of a "Heav'n on Earth" in New England suggests, there was nonetheless an inherent paradox in the fact that New England had to be settled and built, while the colonists, having sacrificed their worldly goods and station once in the act of migration, had to continue to avoid resting in the things of this world. Anne Bradstreet, like Cotton a first-generation migrant and settler, wrote religious lyrics which function as "spiritual workbooks" addressing this challenge (Hammond 1993: 24). While her husband and father, who both served terms as governor of Massachusetts, were involved in building the colony in the public sphere, Bradstreet's role as a homemaker paralleled their efforts in a domestic setting. Her religious lyrics worked to reassert a notion of spiritual pilgrimage, of a self-conscious migration towards death and immortality that would supersede the earthly reconstruction of the Old World community in the New. In the struggle represented in Bradstreet's lyrics, the religious and secular *imitatio* involved in colonization are entwined in mutual competition.

This colonial Puritan version of the traditional struggle between Flesh and Spirit is perhaps best illustrated in Bradstreet's last extant poem, which begins "As weary pilgrim." The central image of the pilgrim is itself old and has traveled far, but context gives the conceit a renewed poignancy in the surprising literal twist that the poet has journeyed to the muddy edge of her civilization and lived through times of deprivation and loss:

As weary pilgrim, now at rest,
    Hugs with delight his silent nest,
His wasted limbs now lie full soft
    That mirey steps have trodden oft,
Blesses himself to think upon
    His dangers past, and travails done.
. . .
A pilgrim I, on earth perplexed
    With sins, with cares and sorrows vext,
By age and pains brought to decay,
    And my clay house mold'ring away.
  (Bradstreet 1967: 294, ll. 1–6, 19–22)

The first half of the poem presents an extended description of the pilgrim's nomadic, outdoor life and diet of "wild fruits" that bears a closer literal resemblance to the Indian lifestyle that Mary Rowlandson was to describe a decade later, than to Bradstreet's more comfortable life as a colonial householder, and the male gendering

also wards off an over-literal reading. But it is part of the work of the poem precisely to diminish Bradstreet's domestic achievements as a settler, to aid her transformation into a more unworldly "saintly self." Focusing on the pilgrim image gives Bradstreet the leverage she needs to address her own situation in the second half of the poem. While its subject is the weakness of her body, her imagery is drawn from the domestic sphere, as in the "house" of her flesh, its illnesses, and the desire for sleep and bed. Such references, though allegorically linked back to the "rugged stones" galling the pilgrim's feet in the opening conceit, evoke a context of homestead, not of migration. But by prefixing the image of the pilgrim, Bradstreet has unsettled her settler context. In the stark reverses she gives to her domestic imagery, she continues this process, making it clear that the pilgrim's "silent nest" means no earthly haven, but the grave. Borrowing from her sphere of domestic responsibility, Bradstreet displaces what might have been her accomplishments onto Christ, who affectionately "perfume[s]" the "bed" of her grave, while she fails even to keep the "clay house" of her own body from "mold'ring away." The poem makes the speaker's weakness a foil to Christ's redeeming power, but it also reinscribes the experience of colonial settlement with the unworldly values of religious migration.

There is an ambiguity of course in the reciprocity in Bradstreet's verse between imagery of religious migration and of worldly settlement. Sor Juana, with a sharp sense of religious irony, has "Occident" welcome "Religion" as "fair Pilgrim from another nation" in her *loa* for *The Divine Narcissus*, only to be met with the offer of absolute domination (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 154). It has been argued that Bradstreet's application of imperial imagery to religious themes aptly illustrates the way in which settler colonies perpetuated the imperialism of their metropoles in the very act of asserting their own identity (based for Bradstreet on religious superiority) in resistance to central control (Gillespie 1999). It is true that Bradstreet's experience of colonial migration seemed to sharpen her sense of the symbolic value of the luxury items found in scriptural imagery: like the jewels and other adornments in her depiction of an imperial heavenly city in "The Flesh and the Spirit" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 287–9). But Bradstreet carefully places such culture-building imagery in a religious tension, where it is used metaphorically to oppose literally worldly values, rather than endorse them. In this, Bradstreet's spiritualization of colonial experience is more complex than that of many later poets. Cotton Mather's incidental lyrics in his 1727 treatise *Agricola*, for instance, effectively ritualize the imperialist appropriation of land through encouraging farmers to "spiritualize" their husbandry. Bradstreet, by contrast, returns to themes of migration to unsettle her heart from worldly goods.

In her meditative poem "Contemplations," for example, initial emblems of rootedness and stability, such as that of a beautiful oak tree and the life-giving sun, give way in the final stanzas to images of dislocation (Bradstreet 1967: 204–14). While rivers and fish evoke possible versions of spiritual and colonial migration, including the brutal violence of conquest, as the fish "forage o'er the spacious sea-green field, / And take the trembling prey before it yield" (lines 174–5), the nightingale's song

interrupts the poet's reverie and presents the counter-example of a strikingly non-invasive life. Though not an American bird, the nightingale was known to migrate between England and continental Europe and here appears as a model of gospel freedom from earthly cares and hoarded treasure, lived in expectation of moving on to "a better region, / Where winter's never felt by that sweet airy legion" (lines 196–7). In a later lyric "In Reference to Her Children," Bradstreet explicitly identifies her journey to heaven with a bird's migration, remembering as she considers the "nest" of her home and children, that she will one day,

From the top bough take my flight
Into a country beyond sight,
Where old ones instantly grow young,
And there with seraphims set song;
(Bradstreet 1967: 234, ll. 77–80)

Bradstreet borrows imagery from nature and from her experience of migration to evoke faith and sacrifice, and to give heaven the reality of a practical destination. Though the influence of colonial experience in Bradstreet's verse is subtle, comparison with the British poet Henry Vaughan's evocation of heaven in his poem "Peace" highlights the extent to which each poet's earthly experience, of colonial migration or of civil war and political exile, informed their religious imagination. Both turned a movement away from their cultural center into an advance towards the divine, but for Vaughan, rusticated to Wales during the Interregnum, heaven was a mystical, visionary place, "a country / Far beyond the stars, / Where stands a wingèd sentry / All skilful in the wars," whereas for Bradstreet and Cotton it was a continuation and fulfillment of the migration begun in the transatlantic voyage (Martz 1986: 285, ll. 1–4).

Implicit in the meditation on the unburdened life of the nightingale and Bradstreet's "weary pilgrim" is the experience of material, cultural, and emotional sacrifice that religious migration entailed. As one scholar has remarked, "Puritanism was a spirituality of the householder in a family and home blessed by God, yet accepting the inevitable loss of everything in this earthly home" (Hambrick-Stowe 1988: 61–2). That a sacrifice made in the hope of future reward was central to the meaning of religious migration is illustrated by the ecstatic lines written by Thomas Tillam "Uppon the first sight of New-England":

Hayle holy-land wherin our holy lord
Hath planted his most true and holy word
Hayle happye people who have dispossest
Your selves of friends, and meanes, to find some rest
For your poore wearied soules, opprest of late . . .
(Meserole 1985: 397, ll. 1–5)

Ambiguously, Tillam promises "sure reward, which you'l receve in heaven," but also has Christ command the settlers to "Posses this Country," adding however that they

must "live not then secure." As in Bradstreet and Cotton's verses, New England occupies an equivocal half-way point between earth and heaven. In this, the sacrifice of leaving one's country, "friends, and meanes" presented an apt parallel with the ultimate sacrifice of mortality, and undercut the experience of colonization for the first migrants with the reminder of the provisionality of all earthly "dwelling."

Such seems to be the colonial dimension behind another of Bradstreet's late poems, "Verses upon the Burning of our House," in which the lyric voice turns an experience of worldly loss into a sacrificial surrender of mortal existence (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 290). Bradstreet's elegiac poem is dramatized by its New World context: the poet had already given up one dwelling-place by accompanying her husband to New England (which at first caused her heart to rise in rebellion) when she experienced the loss of another due to fire in 1666. Bradstreet's lyric struggle to bid "farewell" to her earthly "pelf" therefore ritualistically reenacts and supersedes her initial migration. By emphasizing her affection for her lost belongings ("Here stood that trunk, and there that chest, / There lay that store I counted best") Bradstreet takes some blame for what happens through the hint that she overvalued her goods, and also portrays the inner struggle required to purify her affections. On both counts, however, the poet takes back the initiative and counters the blow she has been dealt by making it serve her meditative purpose. This purpose is apparent in the way in which Bradstreet again associates her body and her house ("Under thy roof no guest shall sit, / Nor at thy table eat a bit"). Together with the biblical associations of Judgment Day, the flames of Old Testament sacrifice and of New Testament refining fire in the opening lines, this association of house and body makes the poem a reflection on human mortality and a reminder of the ephemerality of being a settler on earth.

The simpler diction and tetrameter verse styles favored by Bradstreet in her late religious lyrics, in contrast with the more Elizabethan pomp and literary allusiveness of *The Tenth Muse*, have prompted Eavan Boland to suggest that in the late poems Bradstreet became "parochial" in the best sense, that is, able to write about local, personal concerns without self-consciousness towards England's cultural tradition (Boland 2001). However, as I have suggested, colonial Puritan poetry sought to establish its center less in the colonial environment than in God, whose Word could redeem transient experience. Thus, biblical intertextuality allowed Bradstreet to transform the potentially insignificant event of a colonial house-fire into a nucleus of divine revelation. Although biblical intertextuality could be seen as countering the threat of distance in Bradstreet's colonial poetry, in other ways (as we have seen) a certain consciousness of dislocation was fundamental to her lyric voice. As in the case of the Bay Psalm Book, in Bradstreet's late poetry, verbal and lyric simplicity are less simple in their implications because of the complexity of the colonial context. Indeed, if the plain verse forms of Bradstreet's later verse are understood to be influenced by the Bay Psalm Book, then their simplicity was a politicized assertion of the spiritual superiority of Puritan colonial values.

One could easily overstate the significance of the now well-known preface to the 1640 Bay Psalm Book in which the compilers affirmed that they had "attended

Conscience rather then Elegance, fidelity rather then poetry, in translating the hebrew words into english language, and Davids poetry into english meetre" (Haraszti 1956: Sig.**3^{v}). Although their text was the first book of lyric poems the colony produced, its particular aesthetic was specifically linked to translation. Nonetheless, the deprioritizing of elegance in the cause of truthful and direct communication was also a feature of the plain-style sermon that predominated in colonial Puritan churches. These local influences and values governed the poetry of colonial minister Michael Wigglesworth, as he sought to create a lyric voice appropriate to the needs of the settlers in his pastoral care. In the lyrics of his 1670 collection *Meat Out of the Eater*, Wigglesworth uses a preachy tone and simple ballad meters to carry a message of spiritual inversions: that light can be found in darkness, joy in sorrow, and so forth. As the Bay Psalm Book presented a purified Psalter in language, tunes, and metrical forms that were accessible to the widest possible audience, so Wigglesworth's book of devotional verse offered an essentialized model of the spiritual self, purified of all external specificities so that it could be of practical "use" to the widest range of readers (Hammond 1993: 78–9). Also influenced by the conversion relation that was in widespread use in local churches as a prerequisite for membership, Wigglesworth bases his appeals on experience, as he notes in "a Conclusion Hortatory": "I have not told thee Tales, / Of things unseen, unfelt, / But speak them from Experience: / Believe it how thou wilt" (Wigglesworth 1989: 139, ll. 37–40).

Although his interest in paradox and inversion seems characteristically baroque, Wigglesworth's approach, in line with Puritan homiletics and the Bay Psalm Book, was to pursue clarification of paradox through stylistic simplicity. His use of personal testimony and colloquial, proverbial language in these lyrics was an attempt to compress the gap between experience and representation. By contrast, in verses "Occasioned by a Portrait of Herself," Sor Juana is keen to expose the paradoxical nature of all representation, poetic and pictorial, in the pursuit of truth. Undoing the painter's artifice with her own, her brief lines prismatically turn the painted image into an elaborate list of verbal figures that undo its colorful counterfeit and culminate in its complete erasure: the portrait "is but a fancy, and, as all may see, / is but cadaver, ashes, shadow, void" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 150). Paradoxically, with the fragility of its nature as a mere shadow finally exposed by the poet's own self-indulgent virtuosity, the painted image comes to represent the truth of mortality. Truth is found, in Sor Juana's poem, through a creative enlargement of the distance between object and representation and through countering of artifice with artifice.

Wigglesworth's religious lyrics, on the other hand, claimed to "open" paradoxes, in the way that Puritan sermons were described as "opening" a biblical text. When preaching, Puritan ministers raised possible objections to the doctrines they were expounding, in order to engage and guide their hearers' thoughts (Davies 1990: 90–1). Similarly, Wigglesworth incorporates dialogue into his lyrics: from rhetorical questions like "What may this riddle mean?" to staged debates pitting "Faith" against "Fear" (Wigglesworth 1989: 215, 185–8). But despite this formal recognition of complexity, his lilting short meter verses suggest that religious truth has an attainable

straightforwardness: the brevity of the lines and the simple rhyme schemes create an impression of doctrinal tidiness that jars with the theological and psychological difficulty of the paradoxes described:

> Souldier be strong, who fightest
> Under a Captain Stout:
> Dishonour not thy conquering Head
> By basely giving out.
> Endure a while, Bear up,
> And hope for better things:
> War ends in peace; and Morning light
> Mounts up on Midnights wing.
>
> Through Changes manifold,
> And Dangers perilous,
> Through fiery flames, and water-floods,
> Through ways calamitous.
> We travel towards Heaven
> A quiet Habitation:
> Christ shews a Kingdom there prepar'd
> Ev'n from the worlds foundation.
> (Wigglesworth 1989: 119–20, Meditation 5, ll. 49–64)

Such lyrics "open" or expose the truth of each religious inversion largely by reformulating the paradox into biblical or metaphorical analogies that make it more familiar, but don't really explain it. In "A conclusion Hortatory," at the end of his ten initial Meditations, Wigglesworth portrays himself weeping: "That having been so long / A Scholar in this School, / I have so little progress made, / And been so great a fool" (Wigglesworth 1989: 139, ll. 49–52).

Whereas Wigglesworth turned to riddling lyrics to tackle the counterintuitive and paradoxical nature of religious truth, Edward Taylor used other means in his poetic meditations to evoke a sense of wonder at the mysteries of divine grace. Like Wigglesworth, Taylor was influenced by local forms of religious expression. His poem series *Gods Determinations* is informed by Puritan homiletics and by the morphology of conversion taught in New England churches, and indeed seems (at least theoretically) designed to respond to the needs of those churches by showing timid believers how they might advance towards communicant membership. Whether or not it was read by his parishioners is unknown. Taylor was also interested in spiritual inversions, notably the *via negativa*, and frequently used meiosis to convey God's glory by deprecating the vileness of his own sin, as in Meditation 1.40: "Was ever Heart like mine? / A Sty of Filth, a Trough of Washing-Swill / A Dunghill Pit, a Puddle of mere Slime. / A Nest of Vipers, Hive of Hornets Stings. / A Bag of Poyson, Civit-Box of Sins" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 317). Despite the tone of self-disgust and self-mockery, such poems convey a curiously celebratory attitude to language and its imaginative possibilities for multiplying verbal whips for the

"spiritless" spirit. As John Gatta has pointed out, the proliferation of images and colloquial tone are evocative of oral spontaneity, a vital quality in New England Puritan church life, both in the conversion relation and preaching, because it was believed to be a mark of openness to the Holy Spirit (Gatta 1989: xiv).

But if Taylor's lyric verse reflected local ecclesiastical influences, it adapted them to surprising, parodic effects: his poetic language is a strange combination of the plain and the purple, and his juxtaposition of biblical imagery with terms drawn from kitchen and workshop seems designed to test the centering power of scriptural *imitatio* to its limits, as in Meditation 1.40: "Lord take thy sword: these Anakims destroy: / Then soake my soule in Zions Bucking tub / With Holy Soap, and Nitre, and rich Lye" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 319). The Canaanite giants (Anakim) represent his sins, destroyed by God's hand, but the references to the "Bucking tub" and "Nitre," while perfectly fitting into imagery of being cleansed from sin, bring the frame of reference to earth with their technical specificity as equipment for cleaning cloth. Taylor pushes the vivid image of God washing and rubbing him still further in its physical evocativeness by asking: "Then wrince, and wring mee out till th'water fall / As pure as in the Well: not foule at all." The process seems simultaneously ritualistic and parodic of ritual. In Sor Juana's liturgical works, ritual and parodic incidents, such as the Aztec-Catholic worship of the God of Seeds, or caricatured sacristans garbling their Latin, were performed for a knowing audience and could carry a politicized message. But in Taylor's poetry such moments served an entirely meditative function, pressing on the inward springs of reverence and highlighting the grotesque absurdity of God's grace. As Taylor puts it in Meditation 1.8, God, "his deare-dear Son / Grinds, and kneads up into this Bread of Life. / Which Bread of Life from Heaven down came and stands / Disht on thy Table up by Angells Hands" (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 317). The "Lord's Supper" was one of the few traditional rituals staunchly maintained in the Puritan church. It is the focus of Taylor's Meditation, but his language takes it out of the ecclesiastical and communal context and places it in his frontier kitchen. The ritual is thus demystified in one sense, but grows in ritual significance in another, as, like a precious gift from a loved one, it becomes more wonderful and more personalized than a formal public context would allow.

An ecclesiastical context that was both starved of ritual and that did not consider ritualism as sacred gave Taylor the opportunity to develop his meditative "non-transubstantiating" metaphors (Blake 1971). But can Taylor's poetic idiosyncrasy be related to his colonial experience beyond that of the particular religious milieu of New England? There is nothing in Taylor as evident of a colonial perspective as, for example, the European gothic city that Sarah Kemble Knight imagines in the wild forest she travels through (Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 367; Warner 2000); but Taylor's preoccupation with issues of incongruity, inadequacy, and distance in his poetry resonates with his few extant comments on his own provincialization. Austin Warren described the juxtaposition of scriptural reference and homely imagery in Taylor's verse as a "provincializing of the Infinite" that went beyond his likely model,

Du Bartas, in his *Weeks and Works* (Warren 1948). A schoolteacher by profession, Taylor left England in 1668 after the Act of Uniformity had effectively banned dissenters from teaching and preaching. He joined Samuel Sewall's class at Harvard and after staying on to teach, he accepted a ministerial position at the frontier town of Westfield, aged about 28. Taylor's diary shows that the decision to go to Westfield was difficult: he described traveling there in November 1671 as "the desperatest journey that ever Connecticut men undertooke," and related how the ice on the Connecticut River cracked at every step as his party crossed it. Taylor spent the rest of his life at a double remove from the centers of his civilization: England and Harvard. Twenty-five years after his move, when challenged in a letter by Sewall to debate a theological point, he prefaced his witty response with the comment: "I am far off from the Muses Copses: and the Foggy damps assaulting my Lodgen in these remotest Swamps from the Heliconan quarters, where little Save Clonian Rusticity is Al-A-Mode, will plead my apology" (Taylor 2003: 4).

Unlike some of his fellow New England writers, although Taylor was self-conscious about his colonial marginalization, he did not portray his cultural deprivation as a holy sacrifice. It appears that he did, however, allow it to inform his contemplation of the theological "distances" covered by God's grace, particularly in the Incarnation and the Lord's Supper. Meditation 1.8 begins:

I kening through Astronomy Divine
The Worlds bright Battlement, wherein I spy
A Golden Path my Pensill cannot line,
From that bright Throne unto my Threshold ly.
And while my puzzled thoughts about it pore
I finde the Bread of Life in't at my dore.
(Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 316–17)

Taylor's discovery that the Bread of Life has arrived upon his doorstep like manna in the wilderness, while he was still struggling to trace its "Golden Path," is both comic and moving. Through the meditation, the bread progresses from the door to the table and finally into the speaker's open mouth, almost as if impatient with the delay posed by the poet's reflections. But as the bread comes closest to the speaker's mouth, the disparity between its divine significance and the speaker's moral unworthiness is most keenly felt, and is expressed as a disparity of scale:

Yee Angells, help: This fill would to the brim
Heav'ns whelm'd-down Chrystall meele Bowle, yea and higher.
This Bread of Life dropt in thy mouth, doth Cry.
Eate, Eate me Soul, and thou shalt never dy.

In a comic juxtaposition, the speaker eats the bread at the point where he realizes that it would fill the bowl of the sky to the brim, and yet of course this sense of incongruity is the very awareness that demonstrates the speaker's understanding of

grace and thereby fits him to receive communion. Moreover, the image of the sky as a "Chrystall meele Bowle," even the pun on "Christ," shows Taylor portraying both his distance from God, and God's amazing condescension in allowing himself to be imaged in limited verbal forms that, while only suggestive of God's full greatness, convey a particle of understanding to the human mind, which has been "provincialized" or exiled by the Fall. Such poetic moments, created by disparities of scale, recur throughout Taylor's Meditations. By verbally depicting "the burning Sun, with'ts golden locks / (An hundred Sixty Six times more than th'land) / Ly buttond up in a Tobacco box," in Meditation 2.24, Taylor could generate wonder at God's gracious humility in choosing to "tent" in and among human beings (Taylor 2003: 249, ll. 2–4). Perhaps this appreciation of God's power to overcome distance and paradoxically to marginalize Himself, enabled Taylor to come to terms with his own, smaller sacrifice of provincialization.

Although Taylor made little direct reference in his verse to experiences of migration and settlement, in the accentuated spatial sensitivity used to convey theological ideas, his poetry suggests the indirect influence of his geographical and cultural displacement. Far from "plain" in style, the parodic rituals of Taylor's private Meditations also reflect the influence of a church tradition that, unlike Sor Juana's in Mexico, neither enshrined elaborate ceremonialism, nor made liturgy an available vehicle for poetic expression. In Wigglesworth's public religious lyrics, the influence of the local religious milieu is more directly apparent: the verse of the Bay Psalm Book, Calvinist theology, the plain-style sermon, and the pursuit of purity all shaped his literary style. Wigglesworth's was a style formed in Puritan and colonial reaction against the syncretistic classicism that characterized much European baroque poetry, including of course the poetry of Sor Juana. In some ways, Sor Juana's political, religious, and literary connections with the Spanish court attenuated her distance from her European sources, but her manipulation of this connection, even in her religious verse, was in itself a kind of championing of her colonial heritage. But Wigglesworth's poetic purpose, and Taylor's in *Gods Determinations*, was solely defined by the apparent needs of the local readership, including the need of the colonial churches to be strengthened and enlarged. And if early colonial Puritanism promoted values of homeliness and unadorned faith over the cultural refinement offered by the metropole, it did so partly through the paradoxical notion of sacrifice. As Bradstreet's poems illustrate, the lyric voice could help reshape losses involved in migration, and subsequent analogous losses, into spiritual gains. In this process, the loss of England could be turned to a Puritan migrant's advantage, as a potential gain in proximity to God, though, as in Cotton's poem, this gave New England an ambiguous position in the reordered hierarchies of colonial poetry. The ambiguity of the colony's position, situated between the corrupt Old World and the heavenly New Jerusalem, generated creative tensions, for instance in Bradstreet's verse, where the resonance of migration as pilgrimage has to be negotiated with the imperial, worldly connotations of colonial settlement. For all these colonial lyricists, the scriptural and Christic *imitatio* so central to Protestant poetics played a particularly important role by providing a centering source of imagery and faith that could

overcome any distance. For Taylor in particular, the victory of God's spirit over earthly separation and the limits of geographical distance became itself a source of wonder to be celebrated in religious lyric.

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30

Captivating Animals: Science and Spectacle in Early American Natural Histories

Kathryn Napier Gray

> The princely eagle, and the soaring hawk,
> Whom in their unknown ways there's none can chalk:
> The humbird for some queen's rich cage more fit,
> Than in the vacant wilderness to sit.
> (William Wood, *New England's Prospect*)

The collection of artifacts and information about New World plants, minerals, fossils, animals, and people began as soon as the first explorers left Europe. Their findings proved to be fascinating to European collectors who were interested in the "curiosities" and "natural treasures" of strange and distant lands. In the fifteenth century, the private collection of Jean, Duc de Berry, apparently included " 'giants' bones, sea monsters, carved crystals, and some genuine articles such as ostrich eggs and polar bear skins" (Ritterbush 1969: 568). In seventeenth-century Copenhagen, Ole Worm's collection of reptile skins, fish fossils, and exotic birds was one of the most impressive in Northern Europe. Worm's collection was part of a larger movement across mainland Europe; according to Christian F. Feest, this culture of collecting grew from late medieval treasuries. More particularly, he suggests:

> Assembled by princes and scholars, the encyclopedic nature of these collections was built on their representation of both the natural and the artificial, the works of God and the works of Man. In the absence of modern taxonomic models, the most outstanding principle of selection of the items to be included was their "rarity," which might be based on the individual genius or skill of their maker, or on an origin far distant in time or space. (Feest 1995: 326)

Later, in seventeenth-century Paris, dead bodies and body parts of Native Americans became a particular fascination and, in one instance, "a North American

visitor was flayed after his death at the Hôtel-Dieu in order to preserve his nicely tattooed skin" (ibid: 331). During the eighteenth century, Hans Sloane collected hundreds of different kinds of animals, birds, dried plants, and fossils from all over the world, and this extensive collection became the basis of the British Natural History Museum. On the other side of the Atlantic, in post-Revolutionary America, Charles Willson Peale installed his natural history collection in the Pennsylvania State House. This collection was deliberately arranged to reflect a linear chain of being, where the smallest and weakest of creatures led to the commanding presence of "Man." In order to highlight the educational and scientific intentions of the collection, as Christopher Looby notes: "The specimens he [Peale] mounted and displayed were arranged, in the museum's rooms, in perfect visual order of the Linnaean pattern. And at the top of the hierarchy – in two rows along the ceiling above the cabinets – were displayed the portraits Peale had painted of the heroes of the Revolution, presiding over the rational order of things, of which they were the superior extension" (Looby 1987: 267).

The general trend of collectors, therefore, through the period of colonization to the early years of independence, was to transform the eclectic curiosity cabinets into representative and systematically organized public collections. The written and published accounts of the natural world during this period, however, are not so easily characterized, and in order to trace the development of natural history writing, I will focus on the ways narratives of the colonial period defined and appropriated animals of the American continent. In this essay I draw from a wide range of sources, including early Spanish accounts of exploration in the New World, and French accounts of animals as they were used in trade and ceremonial practices, as well as eighteenth-century accounts from post-Revolutionary America. Specifically, I am interested in the temporal and geographic cross-currents which emerged in the development of Early American natural history writing, and through this comparative approach, I want to trace the spectacle of New World animals in scientific, political, and religious discourses during the colonial period.

Early examples of natural history writing from the first Spanish encounters through to Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* acknowledge the diverse role of animals in the development of colonial to post-Revolutionary life. Animals provided food and clothing for travelers and settlers in the New World; the trade of animal furs became a very lucrative business; the presence of numerous birds and mammals on specific islands and inlets inspired the naming of the landscape in many colonies. Latterly, Thomas Jefferson lauded the scale and magnificence of American mammals in order to reinstate the splendor and beauty of the American natural world after Georges Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, the French naturalist, argued for the superiority of European mammals. Therefore, the role ascribed to birds, animals, and fish, in early exploration narratives and in later more "scientific" accounts of animal life, is significant in terms of subsistence, trade, renaming the landscape, and, in part, characterizing intellectual debates between eighteenth-century Europe and America.

Yet critics rarely discuss the ways writers represented animals in the natural history narratives of the early American period.

To some degree, the transformation of curiosity cabinets into natural history museums reflects the transformation of the written accounts of plant and animal life in exploration and travel narratives into more systematic documentations of the natural world. When collectors preferred to display rare, beautiful, and wondrous specimens, as was the case in the early days of curiosity cabinets, much of the literature of this same period prioritized a similar level of curiosity, but little investigative analysis. Hernandez de Soto's experience of alligators, snakes, and mosquitos, written by the anonymous "Gentleman of Elvas," serves as an indicative example. Rather than develop an analysis of the climate or habitat for these animals, the narrative outlines the human, or rather Spanish, experience of encountering these dangerous animals:

> A deep river runs near Báyamo, larger than the Guadiana, called Tanto. The monstrous alligators do harm in it sometimes to the Indians and animals in the crossing. In all the country there are no wolves, foxes, bears, lions, nor tigers: there are dogs in the woods, which have run wild from the houses, that feed upon the swine: there are snakes, the size of a man's thigh, and even bigger; but they are very sluggish and do no kind of injury... They [Don Carlos and his men] found immense annoyance from mosquitos, particularly in a lake called Bog of Pia, which they had much ado in crossing between mid-day and dark... In this time the insects came in great numbers and settled on the person where exposed, their bite raising lumps that smarted keenly, a single blow with the hand sufficing to kill so many that the blood would run over the arms and body. (de Soto 1907: 143–4)

This kind of vivid description continued into the eighteenth century, most noticeably in William Bartram's *Travels through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida* (1786). In a similar way to de Soto, Bartram recounts his encounters with alligators in dramatically heightened language:

> Behold him [the alligator] rushing forth from the flags and reeds. His enormous body swells. His plaited tail brandished high, floats upon the lake. The waters like a cataract descend from his opening jaws. Clouds of smoke issue from his dilated nostrils. The earth trembles with his thunder... It was obvious that every delay would but tend to encrease [*sic*] my dangers and difficulties, as the sun was near setting, and the alligators gathered around my harbour from all quarters... They struck their jaws together so close to my ears, as almost to stun me, and I expected every moment to be dragged out of the boat and instantly devoured. (Bartram 1980: 116–17)

De Soto and Bartram at first appear to be unlikely bedfellows: their narratives are separated by over two hundred years and their literary and cultural backgrounds are poles apart. Generically, de Soto's narrative is usually situated alongside early exploration narratives of the very first colonial encounters, and Bartram's *Travels* is perhaps

more easily interpreted as a forerunner to the kind of individualism which Thoreau's *Walden* exemplifies. However, both de Soto and Bartram harness the spectacle of American animals in textual form and are, therefore, important to our understanding of the production of natural history writing. Despite having very different aims and intended audiences, de Soto and Bartram foreground the spectacle of New World animals by capturing the physical engagement of "Man" with the American wilderness, through the representation of some of nature's most threatening and fascinating species. These writers, like the collectors of curiosity cabinets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, prioritized the spectacle of nature – that is, what makes it an unusual and rare experience.

More generally, however, when natural history collections and museums provided a more educational and scientific context for the specimens they displayed and the process of categorizing nature became more commonplace, published accounts of natural histories of this period broadly reflected the new "scientific" approach. An example of this development is Mark Catesby's *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida and the Bahama Islands* (London, 1731–43). Together with detailed and colorful illustrations, Catesby's description of the appearance, habitat, feeding, and hunting habits of approximately one hundred birds was one of the most systematic ornithological accounts from the New World. Rather than provide a personal account of his encounter with the birds he describes, Catesby employs what was considered, in the eighteenth century, a far more objective approach:

> This bird weighs nine pounds: the iris of the eye white; over which is a prominence, cover'd with a yellow skin; the bill yellow with the sear of the same colour: the legs and feet are yellow; the talons black, the head and part of the neck is white, as is the tail; all the rest of the body, and wings, are brown.
>
> Tho' it is an eagle of a small size, yet has great strength and spirit, preying on pigs, lambs, and fawns.
>
> They always make their nests near the sea, or great rivers, and usually on old, dead pine or cypress-trees, continuing to build annually on the frame tree, till it falls . . . This bird is called the bald eagle, both in Virginia and Carolina, tho' his head is as much feather'd as the other parts of his body. Both cock and hen have white heads, and their other parts differ very little from one another. (Catesby 1754: 2).

This methodological approach to some extent inspired European naturalists of the Enlightenment, and in particular by Carl von Linnaeus' (or Linne's) systematic categorization of plant and animal life. Broadly, the new "scientific" method sought to name, document, and evaluate living organisms, and in Linnaeus' case this leads to arranging all life forms into a "great chain of being." Linnaeus was principally interested in naming and categorizing plants, and in his hugely influential *Systema Naturæ* (1735) he named and classified thousands of plants according to his own binomial system based on observation, analysis, and comparison. James L. Larson states: "Linnaeus, many believed, had introduced order and precision into natural history and had worked with uncommon zeal to extend scientific knowledge of

organized beings" (Larson 1994: 9). However, while we can trace the development of natural histories from the very personalized, experiential rhetoric of de Soto, for instance, to the Linnaean-style work of Catesby, it would be wrong to suggest that this is a wholly consistent trajectory, as comparison with Bartram suggests. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra persuasively argues:

> Although skepticism about travelers and traditional sources had deep roots in the seventeenth century, if not earlier . . . [a] new "art of reading" appeared in "northern" Europe sometime in the mid-eighteenth century. Unlike Renaissance arts of reading, this new art did not privilege eyewitnesses. Authors argued testimonies needed to be judged by their internal consistency, not by the social standing or learning of the witness. (Cañizares-Esguerra 2000: 12–13)

Cañizares-Esguerra's assessment of discursive practices is broadly accurate, but I would argue that the development of natural history writing illustrates vast cross-currents which transgress temporal and geographical limits. Further, the choice of eyewitness testimony over a "scientific" model, and vice versa, has important implications for the political and ideological agendas writers were seeking to develop. The role and representation of animals in New World narratives, and the development of natural history writing generally, therefore, are significantly shaped by these competing claims to authority and truth.

Authoritative Rhetoric: Personal Testimony and the New Scientific Order

One of the most significant and earliest contributions to early American natural history writing is Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo's *Natural History of the West Indies* (Toledo, 1526), in which he describes in detail a multitude of plants, mammals and birds. One typical example is the anteater, which he characterized as "very much like a bear" but cowardly and defenseless. Following this, he wonderfully visualized its hunger and desire for ants:

> The anteater goes to an anthill and places his tongue on one of the small cracks as thin as the edge of a sword, and by licking he moistens the crack, however small it may be. Its saliva is of such nature and the animal's persistence in licking so great, that little by little the fissure is enlarged, so that very easily and leisurely the anteater can insert and withdraw his tongue, which is very slender and very long in comparison with the size of his body . . . The flesh of the animal is filthy and has a very bad taste. (Oviedo 1959: 52–3)

Oviedo follows a similar pattern in all of his short accounts of New World animals: he familiarizes the animal by comparison with an Old World animal, thus rendering it harmless; he prioritizes its defining features; and fully explains its usefulness in

terms of sustenance. By using this methodical and structured approach throughout his descriptions of different animals and plants, he eliminates from his narrative the sense of emotional and impressionistic accounts of the natural world. Oviedo also claims authority through eyewitness testimony when he states:

> The wonders of nature are best preserved and kept in the memory of man by histories and books in which they are written by intelligent persons who have traveled over the world and who have observed at first hand the things they describe and who describe what they have observed and understood of such things. This was the opinion of Pliny, the foremost of all natural historians . . . In the manner of Pliny, then, in this short study I want to describe for your Majesty what I have seen in your Occidental Empire of the West Indies, Islands and Tierra Firme of the Ocean Sea. (Oviedo 1959: 3)

Oviedo assures the reliability of his narrative by invoking the authority of classical scholars, as well as asserting the credibility of his own eyewitness accounts, employing a rhetorical strategy typical of the sixteenth century. Therefore, he looks towards satisfying claims to a certain kind of scientific or objective authority in his methodical analysis, in addition to claiming the authority of his personal testimony. Oviedo's overall approach, then, is not typical of colonial narratives from the pre-1700 period; rather, his *Natural History* has far more in common with Jefferson's work than it has with accounts of animals and nature by contemporaries like de Soto.

Indeed, Oviedo already formed issues which dominated eighteenth-century debates between Buffon and Jefferson over the supposed degeneracy of American animals in his *Natural History.* On the issue of the size of American animals, Oviedo notes that lions and foxes, for example, are much smaller in the New World. He does not comment pejoratively on this, presumably because the political impulse behind the text is to impress upon King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain the wealth, value, and beauty which the New World had to offer, hence the importance of developing an authoritative rhetoric to accommodate the larger political project of colonial expansion. Jefferson also had a political agenda, and to understand this fully, it is important to consider how Jefferson establishes his own rhetoric of authority.

In many ways, Jefferson employs a similar rhetorical practice to Oviedo when he establishes the veracity of his claim that nature in the New World is as fruitful, prosperous, and captivating as it is in Europe, through a rather complicated reliance on "objective" observation and personal testimony. In order to justify his own claims, in *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787), Jefferson refutes the reliability of previous eyewitness accounts of American animals in earlier narratives by asking:

> But who were these travelers? Have they not been men of very different description from those who have laid open to us the other three quarters of the world? Was natural history the object of their travels? Did they measure or weigh the animals they speak of? or did they not judge of them by sight, or perhaps even from report only? Were they

> acquainted with the animals of their own country, with which they undertake to compare them? Have they not been so ignorant as often to mistake the species? A true answer to these questions would probably lighten their authority, so as to render it insufficient for the foundation of an hypothesis. (Jefferson 1955: 54)

Jefferson's assault on early American travel and exploration narratives is not so much an attack on the efforts made by early colonial writers who narrated their experience of the New World, but rather, an attack on European naturalists, specifically Buffon, who used these early narratives to defend their assertion that New World animals – and thus, the New World in general – were a degenerate version of European species.

At the core of the Buffon–Jefferson debate is the question of scale. Buffon, convinced of the degeneracy of American animals, indigenous and transported, insisted: "The horses, donkeys, oxen, sheep, goats, pigs, dogs, all these animals, I say, became smaller there; and . . . those which were not transported there, and which went there of their own accord, those in short common to both worlds, such as wolves, foxes, deer, roebuck, and moose, are likewise considerably smaller in America than in Europe, and *that without exception*" (quoted by Gerbi 1973: 5). Jefferson, of course, contested this accusation vociferously, and begins his defense of New World animals by insisting on the impressive stature of the mammoth. After assessing and dismissing the possibility that the many skeletons recovered from places like Ohio (Jefferson 1955: 43–4) belonged to elephants or hippopotamuses, Jefferson notes that the discovery of these bones demonstrates that this New World species, the mammoth:

> 1 . . . bespeaks an animal of six times the cubic volume of an elephant . . . 2. The grinders are five times as large, are square, and the grinding surface studded with four or five rows of blunt points: whereas those of the elephant are broad and thin, and their grinding surface flat. . . . 4. From the known temperature and constitution of the elephant he could never have existed in those regions where the remains of the mammoth have been found. (Jefferson 1955: 45)

Through this process of systematic and logical deduction, Jefferson demonstrates his "scientific" credentials, and further claims the authority of the new "scientific" discourse by compiling a series of tables which document and compare the variety and weight of European and American animals. In this "comparative View of the Quadrupeds of Europe and of America" he insists that his study is "not to produce a conclusion in favor of the American species, but to justify a suspension of opinion until we are better informed, and a suspicion in the mean time that there is no uniform difference in favor of either." It should be noted, however, that while Jefferson does not falsify any weights, his measurements are not always the most typical of the species concerned. Rather, he sometimes takes his evidence from examples which are "deemed among the largest of their species," or weights that are "furnished by judicious persons" and "from conjecture only" (Jefferson 1955:

49–50). Clearly, this analysis would not pass contemporary scientific standards, but Jefferson succeeds in developing a rhetoric of "scientific" reliability which his readers and critics would expect and accept. (Both Jefferson and Buffon, of course, take as a given that "bigger is better.")

Complicating this essentially "scientific" discourse is Jefferson's recourse to the borrowed personal testimony of others. As part of his evidence concerning the size and scale of the mammoth, Jefferson invokes the speech of a Delaware Indian and a certain Mr. Stanley:

> Their chief speaker immediately put himself into an attitude of oratory, and with a pomp suited to what he conceived the elevation of his subject, informed him that it was a tradition handed down from their fathers, "That in ancient times a herd of these tremendous animals came to the Bigbone licks, and began an universal destruction of the bear, deer, elks, buffaloes, and other animals" . . . A Mr. Stanley, taken prisoner by the Indians near the mouth of the Tanissee, relates, that, after being transferred through several tribes, from one to another, he was at length carried over the mountains west of the Missouri to a river which runs westwardly; that these bones abounded there; and that the natives described to him the animal to which they belonged as still existing in the northern parts of the country. (Jefferson 1955: 43–4)

The use of Native American oratory and the experience of one Euro-American as part of his argument is perhaps surprising, given his claims to empirical and scientific authority. However, far from undermining his argument, the assimilation of "scientific" analysis and eyewitness testimony, in a similar way to Oviedo, actually harnesses the claims to authority, which both rhetorical approaches offer, and further demonstrates his apparent reliability and credibility.

Paul Lindholdt has suggested: "Very early naturalists relied more on imagination, speculation, and secondary reports than on empirical observation, data collection, and firsthand knowledge. Natural history as scientifically defined today – sanitized of wonder, humor, and an honest sense of awe – emerged in America in the eighteenth century. Hyperbole and boosterism, however, still infected the sought-after objectivity believed to characterize sound science" (Lindholdt 1998: 15). In Jefferson's case, in particular, this blend of the spectacular and the scientific is wonderfully captured when, in an attempt to prove Buffon wrong once and for all, he has, among other things, the skeleton, hide, and antlers of moose, deer, and elk shipped to Paris. Jefferson's plan is not as successful as he had wished, as the specimens were much smaller than he had hoped, and in a letter to Buffon, he stressed:

> The skin of the Moose was drest with the hair on, but a great deal of it has come off, and the rest is ready to drop off. The horns of the elk are remarkably small. I have certainly seen them which would have weighed five or six times as much . . . I must observe also that the horns of the Deer, which accompany these spoils, are not of the fifth or sixth part of the weight of some that I have seen . . . I really suspect you will find that the Moose, the Round horned elk, and the American deer are species not existing in Europe.

> The Moose is perhaps of a new class. I wish these spoils, Sir, may have the merit of adding any thing new to the treasures of nature which [have] so fortunately come under your observation. (Boyd 1953: 195)

Any claim to "scientific" authority on the matter of the scale of American animals through argument and comprehensive empirical analysis, which Jefferson had previously commanded, is complicated in this instance by a rather spectacular show of bravado and American pride. Implicit, then, in this transatlantic exchange of scientific analysis and theoretical accounts of New and Old World animals is a political agenda consistent throughout Jefferson's *Notes*: that is, Jefferson aims to convince Europe that America is as well educated, developed, and as politically autonomous as any European country. He even goes so far as to quantify the number of geniuses per head of population in Europe and America: "The United States contain three millions of inhabitants; France twenty millions; and the British islands ten. We produce a Washington, a Franklin, a Rittenhouse. France then should have half a dozen in each of these lines, and Great-Britain half that number, equally eminent" (Jefferson 1955: 65). Therefore, by insisting that America produces a proportionately equal number of geniuses in comparison with Europe during his discussion on the equality of American animals, Jefferson consolidates his scientific discourse within a framework which emphasizes America's political independence, as well as its potential power and influence on the world stage.

Animal Instincts: Christian Teleology and Tribal Ceremonies

Jefferson's scientific analysis, as it manifests itself in the counting of, and accounting for, American animals and American geniuses, was also underscored by a religious teleology. Again, as part of his debate with Buffon, Jefferson reveals a religious foundation informing his whole "scientific" agenda:

> The truth is, that a Pigmy and a Patagonian, a Mouse and a Mammoth, derive their dimensions from the same nutritive juices. The difference of increment depends on circumstances unsearchable to beings with our capacities. Every race of animals seems to have received from their Maker certain laws of extension at the time of their formation . . . Below these limits they cannot fall, nor rise above them. (Jefferson 1955: 47)

Together with his insistence that America produces an equal number of geniuses, Jefferson's fundamental belief in a "Maker" and a Linnaean-style "great chain of being" secures his scientific and political rhetoric within a religious teleological framework. In relation to Linnaeus and other Enlightenment naturalists, "The teleological element in the idea of natural order was a mainstay in the apologetics of nature and physicotheology" (Larson 1994: 29). Christopher Looby goes so far as to suggest

that post-Revolutionary thinkers and politicians, like Jefferson, who were searching for stable social and political order, looked to these taxonomic systems for an appropriate model:

> More often than not, ethnologists tell us, societies in search of images of ideal order will have recourse to zoological and botanical taxonomies, which are presumed to be objectively given in nature . . . We should not, then, be surprised to find that in the post-revolutionary period, Americans had such recourse. In so doing, it may be, they were acting in obedience to an essential human impulse that seeks to organize society as a reflection or projection of the natural world; and while we don't usually treat the Linnaean taxonomy of nature as the equivalent of the so-called "ethno-taxonomies" of other (presumably less "enlightened") cultures, it served much the same purpose. (Looby 1987: 260)

What is interesting is not that Jefferson was influenced by eighteenth-century scientific and religious teleological frameworks, but that more than two hundred years previously, Oviedo was demonstrating a similar attempt to blend Christian and "scientific" aspirations. Oviedo provides a perfect example of the "great chain of being" when he discusses the nature and feeding habits of the pelican. Oviedo captures the interaction of fish, birds, and humans in one short account of the life-cycle in a settlement near Panama:

> The pelicans appeared always at high tide with the sardines, so many of them flying over the water that they filled the air. They would always dive into the water, catch as many sardines as they could, then rise from the water again. After gobbling down the fish, they would dive into the sea again, then rise again without ever resting. When the tide goes out, the pelicans go with it, continuing their fishing as I have described. Along with the pelicans come the frigate birds, described above. As soon as a pelican rises with the fish it has caught, the frigate bird beats it and pursues it so closely that it casts up the fish it has swallowed. As soon as a fish is thrown out, the frigate bird catches it before it falls into the water. It is a pleasure to watch this game that goes on every day.
>
> There are so many of these pelicans that the Christians send dugouts and boats to the islands and reefs near Panama to get young pelicans that are not old enough to fly. They kill as may as they want with sticks and fill their dugouts with them. They are fat and good to eat. (Oviedo 1959: 65)

This linear chain of life forms, from fish to bird to human, is a microcosm of the larger scale scientific/religious teleology which Linnaeus and Jefferson would later champion. In this account, pelicans and frigate birds also provide some sport for the men as they watch the birds battle for their prey. By harnessing something of the essence of the birds' natures in order to "capture" them for the reader, Oviedo further guarantees the place of the Christian "Man" at the pinnacle of the religious/new scientific, teleological framework.

It did not take European philosophers long to apply racial categories to this "great chain," and while they imagined European "Man" to be the perfect specimen in this

teleological scale, de Pauw suggests of the Native Americans: "The whole human race was indubitably weakened and rendered degenerate in the new continent" (quoted by Gerbi 1973: 54). In a linear chain, which is based on a similar principle to the perceived degeneracy of American animals in the "great chain of being," thinkers like de Pauw judged the apparently "degenerate" tribes of North and South America as examples of humanity's "primitive" and "uneducated" state. This logical paradigm fed into theories of slavery; this framework, however, differed substantially from the paradigms relied upon by earlier European apologists and colonists, including Sepúlveda and Acosta. Gerbi outlines the specific differences between the philosophical frameworks of early colonialists, inspired by Aristotle, and frameworks more common to eighteenth-century thinkers, which were characterized by theories of degeneracy: "The Indians were therefore condemned twice over to be slaves by nature: because they were strong, like Aristotle's born slaves, and because they dwelt in regions that had an enervating climate; in short, because they were robust and fierce and because they were weak and feeble" (Gerbi 1973: 74–5). While I cannot here offer a full discussion of the repercussions of these changing philosophical theories on the development of "Man", it is important to note that by establishing these theoretical frameworks, colonizers – both European and American – justified the plunder and domination of the New World's wealth, land and people. (For an excellent discussion of this issue, see Gerbi 1973: 52–156).

While Christian attempts to understand and order humans' place in the natural world dominate colonial accounts of America's living landscape, there are several occasions where they describe animals to demonstrate Native American symbolic gestures and ceremonial practices. In the early sixteenth century, Cabeza de Vaca recalls: "In the town where the emeralds were presented to us the people gave Dorantes over six hundred open hearts of deer" (Cabeza de Vaca 1907: 108). This episode resonates in two very different ways. First, it is a gesture of kindness, as the Indians offer the Spanish explorers ample food in order to continue their journey. Secondly, the ceremonial significance of the event is highlighted when Cabeza de Vaca contextualizes the event with reference to the presentation of emeralds. Within the framework of a Native American gift-giving ceremony, the deer hearts embody the beauty and value associated with expensive jewels, and Cabeza de Vaca records the practical importance of animals to sustain human life within a far more captivating spectacle.

Later, in seventeenth-century Louisiana, Louis Hennepin, a Recollect missionary, also notes the link between the practical and ceremonial function of animals in the New World. Hennepin's *Description of Louisiana* (1683) records his interest in the potential riches to be gained in the trade of animal fur and skins, most specifically, the buffalo skins, which he describes as being of "very fine wool" and available in great abundance (Hennepin 1880: 145). Further:

> The ordinary skins of these wild cattle weigh from one hundred to a hundred and twenty pounds. The Indians cut off the back and neck part which is the thickest part of

> the skin, and they take only the thinnest part of the belly, which they dress very neatly, with the brains of all kinds of animals, by means of which they render it as supple as our chamois skins dressed with oil. They paint it with different colors, trim it with white and red porcupine quills, and make robes of it to parade in their feasts. In winter they use them to cover themselves especially at night. (Hennepin 1880: 148)

In Hennepin's analysis, the natives use the buffalo skin equally for practical as well as ceremonial use. He emphasizes ceremonial uses further when he recalls his own experience of adoption into Aquipaguetin's family:

> The day after our arrival, Aquipaguetin, who was the head of a large family, covered me with a robe made of ten large dressed beaver-skins, trimmed with porcupine quills. This Indian showed me five or six of his wives, telling them, as I afterward learned, that they should in future regard me as one of their children . . . he had a sweating cabin made, in which he made me enter quite naked . . . This cabin he covered with buffalo-skins . . . As soon as these Indians had several times drawn their breath violently, he began to sing in a thundering voice, the others seconded him, all putting their hands on my body, and rubbing me, while they wept bitterly. I began to faint, but I came out of the cabin, and could scarcely take my habit to put on. When he had made me sweat thus three times in a week, I felt as strong as ever. (Hennepin 1880: 228)

In a similar way to Cabeza de Vaca's narrative, Hennepin locates the spectacle of the animal, specifically the decorated buffalo skin, beaver skin, and porcupine quills, at the center of a ceremonial practice, on this occasion a healing ceremony. Therefore, while in his narrative Hennepin values animals for their trading value, he confirms their symbolic and ceremonial importance in Native practices through the quality of their meat, the warmth of their skins when made into clothing, the elaborate design of the decorative skins as they are used in feasts, and for medicinal purpose. In this way, Hennepin's narrative captures the buffalo in many different guises: from its appearance in its natural habitat, to the quality of its skin and meat, to the spectacle of its role in spiritual and curative ceremonies. Therefore, both Hennepin and Cabeza de Vaca illustrate an alternative relationship between human and animals, one which does not limit itself to Western religious and scientific teleological frameworks, when they recount the spiritual and ceremonial importance of animals in some Native American tribal practices.

Transforming Animals: Natural Spectacles and Scientific Analysis

Apart from the usefulness of larger animals such as the buffalo for food and clothing, descriptions of the more "beautiful" animals also played an important role in the development of early American natural history narratives. The transformation of William Wood's hummingbird, for example, "for some queen's rich cage more fit, / Than in the vacant wilderness to sit" (Wood 1993: 48), drives to the very heart of

the ways in which colonial travelers, explorers, collectors, and envoys attempted to capture the wonders of New World plant and animal life in their satchels, trunks, notebooks, and published accounts. Wood was not the first to note the beauty of the hummingbird. A century earlier Oviedo suggested: "They are so small that they look like the little birds placed by the illuminators in the margins of books of hours. Their plumage is very beautiful; they are gold, green, and of other colors. Its bill is as long as its body and it is as slender as a pin" (Oviedo 1959: 71). Although Oviedo does reflect on the hummingbird's natural habitat, this desire to imagine and capture the small beautiful creature and transform it into a spectacle for curious Europeans is symptomatic of the European desire to shape and dominate the living landscape of the American continent.

Attempts to quantify the essence and existence of the hummingbird extended throughout the colonial period and into the eighteenth century. In a *Treatise of Brasil* (ca. 1600) Fr. Manoel Tristaon Emfermeiro of the Colegio da Baia (a Portuguese Jesuit) agrees that the hummingbird "is the finest bird that can be imagined" with yellow feathers "finer than gold" (quoted in Purchas 1625: 1305), but suggests a very unusual genesis:

> They haue two beginnings of their generation, some are hatched of eggs like other birds, others of little bubbles, and it is a thing to bee noted, a little bubble to beginne to conuert it self into a little bird, for at one instant it is a bubble and a bird, and so it converts it selfe into this most faire bird, a wonderfull thing, and vnknowne to the Philosophers, seeing one liuing creature without corruption is conuerted into another. (Quoted in Purchas 1625: 1305)

Through his own personal testimony, Fr. Manoel describes and marvels at the wonder of this spontaneous, natural transformation. Great philosophical (Aristotle) and religious (St. Augustine) thinkers had already supported the notion of spontaneous generation; therefore, when Buffon undertook to explain the existence of some New World animals through this theoretical lens, he was on well-established ground. (For a discussion of the contextualization of Buffon's theory of spontaneous generation, via Aristotle, St. Augustine, and others, see Gerbi 1973: 9–14.) Buffon, of course, has a very different agenda to Manoel, and rather than promote the colonies, Buffon intended to use this kind of spontaneous generation as evidence of an immature or degenerate, indecipherable mass. Buffon suggested:

> It is thus principally because there were few men in America and because the majority of these men, leading an animal-like existence, left nature in its wild state and neglected the earth, that it has remained cold, incapable of producing active principles, developing the seeds of the great quadrupeds, for whose growth and multiplication there are required all the warmth and activity that the sun can give to a loving earth; and it is for the contrary reason that the insects and reptiles, and all the species of animal that crawl in the mud, whose blood is water, and who flourish in putrescence, are more numerous and larger in the low wet marshy lands of this new continent. (Quoted in Gerbi 1973: 8)

The image of a dismal swamp, spontaneously generating insects and insect-like creatures, is far from the captivating beauty of the hummingbird. Wood, Oviedo, and Fr. Manoel were responding to different political agendas, and were engaged in writing very different kinds of narrative, but each uses the example of the hummingbird to promote and celebrate the New World landscape. Buffon also uses the spectacle of New World creatures to influence the reader. However, contrary to these earlier examples, by asserting his "scientific" knowledge, Buffon wants to promote what he perceives to be the continued superiority of the European intellectual elite. In a period when America was in the process of forming its own independent political identity, Buffon, and other European naturalists, responded by insisting on the degeneracy, immaturity, and inferiority of America by speculating (however inaccurately) on the scale, quality and diversity of the animals populating this vast and diverse continent.

Pamela Regis, in her discussion of Bartram's personal experience of the natural world, suggests that this kind of "natural historical description is static and atemporal" and, further, "any such personal relationship to the land is unrepresentable by the natural historical method and its attendant rhetoric, which requires contemplation by both observer and reader, but makes no provision for use" (Regis 1992: 78). Contrary to this, I would argue that claims to authority, in the description and analysis from the smallest hummingbird "bubble" to the largest mammoth skeleton, are very much bound-up with the personal experience and the political agenda of the author. Far from creating a natural history which was static and atemporal, eyewitness testimony of colonial travelers and the scientific rhetoric of colonial and Revolutionary accounts, from Oviedo to Jefferson, demonstrate that narratives of nature and natural history characterized the living landscape of the New World as a captivating spectacle, which in turn fed contemporaneous political and ideological ambitions of colonial expansion and American independence.

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31
Challenging Conventional Historiography: The Roaming "I"/Eye in Early Colonial American Eyewitness Accounts

Jerry M. Williams

> The fundamental configuration of knowledge consisted of the reciprocal cross-reference of signs and similitudes.
>
> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*

> I saw on this expedition very many things that I now pass over in silence. Expression is too weak for the reality.
>
> Amerigo Vespucci, *The Four Voyages*

As colonial Latin American letters continue to shift focus away from postcolonial theory in favor of alternative methods that explore the overall effect of decolonization, there remain unsettled polemics regarding the notion of discovery, early images of humanity and nature, the ethics of conquest, and practical and theoretical aspects of evangelization. The formidable limitations of space, time, inheritance, environment, and language impeded the rapid assimilation of America into Europe's consciousness. The geographical presence of an unknown continent pitted Old World scholasticism against New World empiricism. Contemplation of new-world phenomena disconcerted the regulation of lexical devices chroniclers employed to convey meaning. They often constructed meaning by imperfect description and the negation of experience, which they in turn erected into a system of belief. At issue is how writers of varying intellectual formation challenged conventional historiography when they moved from the silent contemplation of strange peoples, objects, and their value to their written (and graphic) representation.

In this essay I embrace the notion of transatlantic encounter over discovery, and draw on theories of cultural criticism in defining the correspondence between literature and history. This approach to decoding invokes the use of fundamentals found in disciplines ranging from science and philosophy to religion, ethnography, and

iconography. Against the polemic of "discovery" and America as the literary creation of Europeans, Walter Mignolo registers his "discomfort with names such as 'New World' or 'Latin America' " (Mignolo 1989: 337). The task of naming involved a reliance on rhetorical formulae, metaphors, and stereotypes in order to elucidate the unknown and in order to render the exotic into forms recognizable to the reader. Hayden White argues that a historical narrative is more than a reproduction of the events cited in it; it is also a complex of symbols which guides readers to identify "an icon of the structure of those events in our literary tradition" (White 1978: 88). The more useful elements of White's reasoning provide the framework for this examination of the significance of language in addressing one problem immediately relevant to the exploration of America: the attempt by early writers to document and provide evidence for the many wonders this era represented for the European eye (I), appetite, and industry.

Chroniclers and narrators of the period can be divided into two distinct groups: original authors such as Cortés, Columbus, and Hariot who, as authoritative eyewitnesses, provide first-hand accounts of the events they record; and copyists or interpreters such as Pérez de Oliva, Mártir de Anglería, and Hakluyt, who saw the New World more through reconstructive acts of imagination than via direct contact with the land. This essay draws from the body of works represented by the first group. The typological problem revealed by this formal distinction emerges when soldiers, priests, adventurers, philosophers, scientists, licentiates, and statesmen employ distinct narrative voices to describe the process of encounter. The corpus of textual writings that characterize sixteenth-century historical discourse (dispatches, letters, diaries, relations, journals, chronicles, and so on) exposes a dialogue between textual and discursive formations that are contiguous (Merrim 1986). Regarding the roles of discourse, Foucault reminds us: "In the sixteenth century, one asked oneself how it was possible to know that a sign did in fact designate what it signified" (Foucault 1970: 42). Writers used formulaic language to convey the fact that the New World has to be seen to be believed, that it is "very contrary to all expectation and likelihood" (Grenville 1986: 79), and that it has no equal in all of Europe; the process of naming the "new" is facilitated to some extent by analogy.

The question of language (oral, written, signed, iconographic) and representation surfaces during the first days of encounter. The impact of the new environment is such that it disconcerts the powers of observation and diminishes the ability to communicate. Language, respected as a civilizing force, bestows order on the universe and lends authority to the user. Native languages, unintelligible to Europeans, test the boundaries of European culture and shape the perception of the Europeans. When Indian languages are perceived as an obstacle to comprehension, language ceases to be a reassuring power. Native inhabitants are said not to possess a language *per se*, but rather a system of communication that falls short of the requirements for intelligible speech. Within European languages, a formal system of conventionalized signs, symbols, gestures, or marks have understood meanings; objects and actions suggest a language that is apprehended for the ideas or sentiments associated with it. Let us

consider endeavors to converse with Indians by Columbus, Vespucci, Hariot, and Vaz de Caminha, and the judgments they formed about the natives.

> Thus from the small understanding which we have of them and from the dubious accounts which they have given us, all so confused, up to now it has not been possible to know the truth of the death of our people. (Columbus 1988: 62–3)

> Through conversing with us they were brought into great doubts of their own, and no small admiration of ours, with earnest desire in many, to learn more than we had means for want of perfect utterance in their language to express. (Hariot 1971: E3–4)

> They speak rarely. We found such a variety of tongues in every hundred leagues that they do not understand one another. (Vespucci 1966: 95)

> [The Indian] made a sign towards the land and then to the beads and to the collar of the captain, as if to say that they would give gold for that. We interpreted this so, because we wished to, but if he meant that he would take the beads and also the collar, we did not wish to understand because we did not intend to give it to him. (Caminha, qtd. in Greenlee 1938: 13; Castillo and Schweitzer 2001: 33–4)

Hariot confirms that his own language is an imperfect means of communication with the Indians, yet the natives, upon hearing spoken English, allegedly cast doubt on the effectiveness of their own tongue. The lack of acquaintance with native tongues proves but a temporary impediment to chroniclers, for in processing speech, writers were able to silence inconvenient or discordant voices. Textual orality is fragmented because the Indians' language is elusive and, as Michel de Certeau points out in his dissection of Montaigne's essay on cannibals, the interpreter discovers that the Other's speech is forever beyond his grasp. Interpreting silence and assuming the unspoken discourse of the Other alter speech, which makes possible the act of writing: "As something groundbreaking and organizing, path finding in its own space, [speech] precedes us, moving, passing on. It is always ahead of us . . . It is the death of speech that authorizes the writing that arises, the poetic challenge" (Certeau 1986: 78).

Perception did not often neatly coincide with or reflect the reality or experience of encounter. Writers arrive at definitions of nature and humankind through the use of description by negation. This convention is a natural response to the displacement they feel in new surroundings:

> It appears as a kind of reflex action in conflicts between nations, classes . . . If we do not know what we think "civilization" is, we can always find an example of what it is not. When men were uncertain as to the precise quality of their sensed humanity, they appealed to the concept of wildness to designate an area of subhumanity that was characterized by everything they hoped they were not. (White 1978: 152)

When applied to the representation of New World cultures, conventions of negation allow writers to affirm what is significant about their own culture and to hypothesize about the physical and metaphysical differences of others. The strain

between self and experience, and the struggle to maintain the centrality of one's own frame of reference, appear in conclusions that fall short of being absolute negations. Writers stress the deficient qualities, tenets, or ideas of Indian culture, which leads the reader to credit more an author's negations than affirmations. For example, Hariot comments on how displaced English settlers in Virginia felt:

> Because they were not to be found any English cities nor such fair houses, nor any of their old accustomed dainty food, nor any soft beds of down or feathers, the country was to them miserable and their reports thereof according. (Hariot1971: A4)

As in Vespucci's reports, Hariot generally assesses native civilizations more in terms of how they differ from the European norm than for their inherent worth. Readers are informed that nudity and sexual freedom go hand-in-hand, that the natives are unfamiliar with iron and metals, that they have no ordered form of government or laws, and that they lack an appreciation of private property, power, money, and precious gems.

> [They have] no edge tools or weapons of iron or steel to offend us with, neither know they how to make any. Neither have they anything to defend themselves but shields made of barks, and some armours made of sticks wickered together with thread. (Hariot 1971: E1)

At meals they do not use tablecloths or napkins, and are ignorant of the value of linen and other kinds of cloth. Their rude nature expresses itself in their physique, and writers compare the Amerindians unfavorably to the Tartars because of their broad cheek-bones. In religious customs they approximate other enemies of the Spanish Crown or incarnate the worse indulgences of antiquity: "No one of this race, as far as we saw, observed any religious law. They can not justly be called either Jews or Moors; nay, they are far worse than the gentiles themselves or the pagans . . . Since their life is so entirely given over to pleasure, I should style it Epicurean" (Vespucci 1966: 97). Writers compare Indians to other groups whose customs are thought to be at odds with Christian virtue, such as Moors, Jews, Turks, Africans, Orientals. Comparisons of natives with Spaniards are generally favorable and tend to highlight positive aspects of European culture; writers use negative traits of disfavored peoples to underscore their deficient nature. Cultural typography renders Indians inhuman, savage, and of an animal-like simplicity, a people with whom it is difficult to communicate and who are, in Vespucci's estimation, worthy only of enslavement.

When the beliefs of writers are challenged and suspended, they struggle to find a framework for representation. A frequent rhetorical convention they invoke in order to surmount silence and incommensurability is to declare that their sensibilities are overwhelmed to such an extent that they cannot put lived experiences into words.

> Your Royal Majesty may rest assured on this point, that their numerous customs are all so barbarous that I cannot describe them adequately here . . . It is not an easy task to recount the honors which they showered upon us here. (Vespucci 1966: 101–41)

> In the city [Moctezuma] possessed houses . . . each so wonderful that it would seem impossible to me to relate their goodness and magnificence, of which I will say no more than that there is not their like in Spain. (Cortés 1971: 67)

Readers confront contradictory statements to the effect that expeditions yield nothing of great value, immediately followed by catalogues of an infinite number of seductive artifacts for which words are allegedly inadequate.

If it is true that language, as a cultural tool, holds the potential for domesticating strange phenomena, then it is a tool that oftentimes fails to reassure users of its power. Silence mirrors the "psychic and physical displacement" of informants whose identity and experience *vis-a-vis* America is weak, and whose struggle to relieve the tension between words and things merely speaks of "a kind of panic which was the result of perceptual stress" (Franklin 1979: 6). The despair writers voice is evident in the account of friar Ramón Pané, who accompanied Columbus on his second voyage. In his drive to acquire data at any cost, Pané contends with moments of lagging perception. Although he sees the native civilization as devoid of a system of writing, he tries to convince both himself and his readers that his account is nonetheless accurate. Pané's vacillation between certainty and doubt overtaxes his command of his own written language: "I cannot write down accurately their myths . . . I believe that I am telling last things first and the first last . . . As I wrote in haste and had not enough paper, I could not put everything where it belonged, yet I have made no mistake, for they believe everything that is written here" (Pané 1974: 24–8). Pané seeks to fill the void of language with an authoritarianism manifest in his claim to have made no error; this highlights the efficacy of strategies to control Indian speech and to reassure European readers. Under the weight of naming, language becomes entangled in a web of strangeness where writers invent dialogue and impute meaning in order to compensate for their own feelings of displacement.

Pané distinguishes himself by focusing on the negative aspects of religious ceremonies and their attendant dramatic components. He thinks Indian rites are governed by a deficiency of reason and deceit perpetuated by chieftains: "These deceptions I have seen with my own eyes, whereas the other things I told about I heard of only from others" (ibid: 32). Pané erects the negation of experience into an apology so that, at the conclusion of his narrative – and despite valiant efforts at reporting – he falls into a rhetoric of self-deprecation, denying the intrinsic value of his text. His rush to chronicle the experiences unfolding about him results in a physical and mental strain: "I could not learn any more about this, and what I have written is of little worth." Self-effacement makes him declare: "I seek neither spiritual nor temporal benefit" (ibid: 168, 56). Vespucci also relies on this convention: "I have not yet published [*The Four Voyages*] because I . . . do not relish those which I have written, notwithstanding that many encourage me to publish it. I must still revise it and verify my statements" (1983: 13).

Pané is not alone in his confrontation with language, where the first-person singular "I" struggles to decode what the eye beholds. While the lack of words

obstructs the recording of data, there are several evidential matters difficult to overlook: a shortage of paper, constraints of time and space, and the persistent question of comprehension. Let us consider commentaries by Cortés on ceremonies he witnesses within Moctezuma's kingdom, the frustrations of Vespucci, the endeavors of Las Casas to capture the essence of a native religious play, and the lamentation of Alonso de Ercilla.

> [There are] so many ceremonies that many sheets of paper would not suffice to give your Majesties a minute and true account of them. (Cortés 1971: 21)
>
> The various ceremonies which this ruler observed were so many and so curious that there is not space here to recount them, nor proper memory for retaining them. (Cortés 1971: 68)
>
> We were received with such numerous and such barbarous ceremonies that my pen is too weak to describe them . . . Should any one desire to describe all that we saw in the course of that voyage, paper would not suffice him. (Vespucci 1966: 108–41)
>
> There were so many things to notice and to admire that neither a heap of paper nor an abundance of words would suffice to praise it. (Las Casas 1967: 334)
>
> On account of poor provisions and the little time there is for writing . . . often writing on hides and on scraps of paper so small as to barely accommodate six verses, it exacted of me a great deal of work to piece them together . . . I hope that whoever reads it [*La Araucana*] will be able to excuse the errors it contains. (Ercilla 1972: 11)

Description is a tedious, labor-intensive task which, in the words of Vespucci, eventually leads to fatigue: "Since it wearies me to describe all things in detail, may it suffice your Majesty to know that . . . "; "Since I have already been tired out by the length of the preceding narratives . . . I may be permitted to be somewhat brief" (Vespucci 1966: 140–5). Of equal weight is Pané's assertion: "I speak with authority, for I have worn myself out in seeking to learn the truth about this matter" (Pané 1974: 55). The inability to capture in words the fullness of what the eye (I) and the imagination have beheld produces little effect on the "truth" of statements made by writers. The singular connective thread which binds discourse of the "discovery" era is that "assertions must be referential [and] the reader . . . a target of persuasion, emotional or otherwise" (Kinneavy 1971: 88). When faced with the inadequacy of words to convey new realities, writers choose to couple visual modes of representation with verbal descriptions in order to achieve increased authority and meaning. Illustrations produced in response to changing perceptions of indigenous cultures not only depict the "barbaric" practices of the natives themselves, but also chronicle the misuse of trust and authority. The "graphic grammar" (Bucher 1981) of new-world iconography confronts the viewer-reader-spectator with a conflation of utopian and barbaric icons of native cultures. White reminds us that "It is the very strangeness of the original as it appeared . . . that inspired the historian's efforts to make a model of it in the first place" (White 1978: 88). An overview of early woodcuts and engravings underscores

the notion of description by negation I have been developing and solidifies the correspondence between verbal and non-verbal formulae for reporting (Sturtevant 1976; Hulton 1984).

Traditionally, a uniform voice has shaped the history of discourse that accords itself the right to speak as the voice of reason and authority. "Formulated in accordance with European categories of perception, analysis, and exposition, the history of the discovery and conquest of America was, to a great extent, built on silence, omission, and absence," according to Beatriz Pastor (1989: 122–3). That chroniclers from various European cultures are conscious of their lexical deficiencies constitutes more than an engaging idiosyncratic trait. Gestures of denial and negation, born out of the natural deficiency of language, support the affirmation of difference in a setting where writers can explain actual conditions through negations. The void of language not only strains perception and promotes silence; it also destabilizes control over objects. In the abstract, language constituted power and European writers could rely on it to describe the moral and political landscape of America. However, charting a course through the linguistic sea of encounter is uncertain, for the instruments of navigation are inadequate. White posits that writers constitute their subjects as objects by the very language they employ to define them: "The shape of the relationships which appear to be inherent in the objects inhabiting the field will in reality have been imposed on the field by the investigator in the very act of identifying and describing the objects he finds there" (White 1978: 95).

With the European power to name checked by new-world stimuli, explorers compensated with acts of violence or the suppression of alterity (the Indians' voice and language) as a tangible means of control. In Vespucci's epigraph, we find that although his endeavors cannot be explained by manifest negations alone, they are informed by perception (sight), silence, and the inadequacy of language. If we take the chronicle or historical narrative as an extended metaphor, then the elements that sixteenth-century annalists seek to reproduce acquire their force through a series of contextual associations that invite the reader to call to mind images of what they indicate. This approach is easier in the initial years, when the public to which these early accounts are directed could be classified as a restricted, insular group of scholars possessing academic competencies and frames of reference similar to those of the writer.

The historian's inventory of the New World is replete with visual metaphors and similes which, within an "emotionally satisfying, religiously orthodox and poetically inspiring" view of the world (Kearney 1971: 8), "liken" reported events and symbols to things familiar to the culture and sophistication of the chronicler's audience. Writers achieve meaning by shifting analogy within the readership's frame of reference. Foucault reminds us: "It is by means of comparison that we discover 'form, extent, movement and other such things.' All knowledge is obtained by the comparison of two or more things with each other. Comparison is required for the acquisition of almost all knowledge" (Foucault 1970: 52). Consequently, the historian's language of choice is figurative, not technical. Europe is the point of departure

for initial comparisons, a land as closed as it is fixed in the worldview of Renaissance citizenry.

Abundance as Metaphor: The Inexplicable

So considerable are the resources of America that its vastness at times eludes description. Not only is the land more fertile than Europe, but also its abundance of diverse fruits seem to defy natural order. The very term "abundance" becomes a metaphor for America's riches.

> It is one of the most fertile and abundant lands in the world, the thickest for sowing whatever one wants, and where with little effort one can cultivate and manage well. (Cieza de León 1984: 273)

> In the Indies things grow much better than in Europe. I believe that the main reason for this is that over there [the Indies] there is more diversity of temperate climates than here, and so over there it is easy to accommodate plants to the climate they require. (Acosta 1880: 174)

Texts are punctuated with testimonials to "the infinity, the diversity, the beauty, and the multitude there is" of species of flora and fauna (Landa 1978: 134). The land is "as good and as fertile and so natural like ours in Spain," if not better (Carvajal 1955: 100); "the ground more firm and deeper mould . . . finer grass and as good as ever we saw any in England" (Hariot 1971: F3). Some of the adjectives and hyperbolic phrases writers utilize to reinforce this concept of quality and prosperity are: innumerable, excellent, well supplied, delicious, healthy, multiple(d), fertile, beneficial, lukewarm, verdant, very fresh, very beautiful, large, nourishing, advantageous, excessive, copious, abundant, and marvelous. Todorov informs us that this "intransitive admiration of nature [is] experienced with such intensity that it is freed from any interpretation and from any function. Such delight in nature no longer has any finality" (Todorov 1984: 23).

Columbus is the first to characterize the New World as a place that defies description. In interpreting the *terra firma* against the complex backdrop of medieval expectancies, he opens the question of how to find equivalents for the diverse elements he has witnessed:

> There are many ports on the sea coast, without comparison with other European ones that I know . . . The sea ports, here they have to be seen to be believed . . . The truth is that [the Indians] are innocent and so free with what they possess, that no one would believe it without seeing it. (Colón 1965: 150)

> As far as natural beauty, the Christians said that there was no comparison, as concerns men and women. Also they said of the beauty of the lands that they saw, that there was no comparison with those of Castile. (Colón 1971: 88)

Although the New World symbolizes all that the Old is not, writers could not easily describe the material presence of America. The novelty of the new lands and strange peoples disquiets the sensibilities and tests the anecdotal talents of testimonial writers, who repeatedly state that a particular "discovery" is without parallel or that it has no equivalent in the European market. Given the changes that the encounter with America wrought on Renaissance historiography, writers struggled as much for adequate words as for accuracy and authority: "The very newness of each encounter with American realities rendered other types of historiographic accreditation ultimately irrelevant" (Zamora 1982: 228). Frequently, chroniclers of the period declare that they do not know where or how to begin to particularize the matter before them: "I say that there was so much, that to write everything separately, I do not know where to begin" (Díaz del Castillo 1974: 168); "There is so much to write that I certify to Your High Highness that I do not know where to start" (Cortés 1971: 66). Chroniclers use the same construction in numerical generalizations about the natives: "We have baptized more than two-hundred thousand, and even so many that I myself do not know the number" (Gante 1951: 14).

Equally important in confronting the overflow of information is the burden writers experience in processing it in an ordered fashion. No author better acknowledges this dilemma than Pané. When describing one of his interactions with the natives, he alludes to his limitations as an eyewitness: "And since they do not have writing system nor alphabet, they can not give a good account of how they have heard this from their ancestors, and that is why they do not agree on what they say, nor can one even write in ordered fashion what they relate" (Pané 1974: 24). Ironically, like the non-literate Indians, Pané experiences a destabilization of his frame of reference and is compelled to admit that he lacks the necessary linguistic skills in his own tongue to properly express his feelings and to interpret data provided by native informants. Gante echoes this predicament: "I could tell a lot about this land were it not for the fact that I have completely neglected my native tongue" (Gante 1951: 19). This lexical void notwithstanding, the fundamental question for the historian remains the transition from spectator to writer, in order to name and describe.

Inaccurate or incomplete descriptions sometimes result from the coupling of seemingly similar elements. In comparing American folk taxonomy with the nomenclature of the Old World, José de Acosta points to the inexactitude and haphazard manner in which chroniclers applied European generic names to indigenous flora based on superficial similarity: "The reason for the Spaniards having called it a plantain (because the natives did not have such a word) was, as in other things, some similarity that they found" (Acosta 1880: 178). Assigning specific names to islands, flora, and fauna is not as taxing for writers as decoding the significance of new names within the boundaries of European language and culture, especially for a readership that does not have illustrations of the objects being depicted. Where Acosta fights the destabilization of his frame of reference by superimposing a preexisting classification on analogous elements, Hariot informs readers of the constraint he feels in not being able to translate indigenous names:

> Of all sorts of fowl I have the names in the country language of fourscore and six . . . excellent good fish, which we have taken and eaten, whose names I know not but in the country language. (Hariot 1971: D2–3)

> There are many other strange trees whose names I know but in the Virginian language. (Hariot 1971: E)

Historians use a variety of relative phrases to underscore their interpretation of reality and the creation of arbitrary categories based on what they witness or hear from native informants: "I understood," "In my estimation," "It seemed to be that," "I have it understood that," "I believe that," "It is true that," "I say as truth that," "I, in truthful terms and as eyewitness," "You need not doubt," "We have seen proof," "As far forth as I know and remember," "It cannot yet be certified," and "I could allege the difference." As rhetorical formulae, these relative phrases qualify the writer's testimony and indicate that writers glean data subjectively but draw supposedly objective conclusions from what they witness. They use comparison, contrast, analogy, simile, metaphor, and hyperbole as the instruments for elucidating the new body of impressions. To this end, Foucault calls our attention to one of the roles of discourse in the sixteenth century:

> The world is covered with signs that must be deciphered, and those signs, which must reveal resemblances and affinities, are themselves no more than forms of similitude . . . The function proper to knowledge is not seeing or demonstrating; it is interpreting. (Foucault 1970: 32)

For chroniclers of this period, the struggle remains to transform their direct experiences into language for the edification of their audience, to explain the New World in terms of analogies drawn from empirical data.

The concrete abundance revealed in America disconcerts narrators, upsetting their regulation of the lexical devices needed to convey meaning. As a metaphor, however, abundance "tells us what images to look for in our culturally encoded experience in order to determine how we should feel about" what is represented (White 1978: 91). Because there is an objective condition of abundance, the term "abundance" becomes culturally loaded in a positive way. The inexplicable is also not menacing: the abundant land is not the howling wilderness, it does not threaten as readily to feralize but rather to transform social organization and discourse.

Metaphor and Simile

Aside from remarking on these resemblances between the land mass of the Old and New Worlds, writers likened the natives' spiritual and physical qualities to the oxymoronic notion of a wild humanity (White 1978: 150–82). They asserted the primacy of Others as anomalous humans in classification schemes which ultimately

track attitudes: "Metaphors are crucially necessary when a culture or social group encounters phenomena that either elude or run afoul of normal expectations or quotidian experiences" (ibid: 84). Ambiguity about the Other's humanity makes possible the dual representation of the natives as a barbaric yet redeemable race. Vivid images depict the simple savage and what will later be called the "noble savage." Such a dualism is characteristic of the polar possibilities representing difference, where stereotypes emerge as projections of psychological anxiety onto the Other. The creation of metaphor itself is a form of possession and self-possession, a way to maintain one's integrity and one's worldview. It is the presence of the Other that threatens to make these early historians lose themselves.

Writers contrast the ordered state of religion in the Old World with the inadequate spiritual development of New World inhabitants. Yet no matter how much aboriginal religion is at odds with Christian sensibility, European observers can broach the differences: "There were priests assigned to serve the temples, like our bishops, canons and other dignitaries" (*Conquistador anónimo* 1858: 383); "They ate nothing else . . . except for every twenty days, which were holidays, like our Sundays" (Mendieta 1971: 106). Priests adorn themselves with "miters like those of bishops" (Carvajal 1955: 94) and long black capes and hoods "like those of the Dominicans, which also resembled a bit those of canons" (Díaz del Castillo 1974: 176); the principal religious leaders grow their hair "in the style of Nazarenes" (Motolinía 1969: 36); and, at sunset, as during vespers, the poor bury their dead reverently in paupers' graves, like Christians. For constructing and reinforcing paradigmatic images of the nature of religious life in America, chroniclers "describe in such a way as to inform the reader what to take as an icon" (White 1978: 88). Thus, native hymns are intoned like vespers, indigenous priests are likened to bishops, and their vestments are as dignified as holy robes.

Sociopolitical figures of the Old World find their counterparts in America. Indian functionaries correspond in rank and service to titular heads of Europe. This analogous arrangement draws on the readers' awareness of the order of the society in which they live, and encourages their conclusion that the two systems are similar in many aspects:

> The system that the people have in governing themselves . . . is almost like the seignories of Venice and Genoa or Pisa, because there is no general lord amongst them all. (Cortés 1971: 41)

> These people had a great lord who was like an emperor, and besides they had and have others like kings, dukes and counts, governors, gentlemen, squires, and men of arms. They are so feared and obeyed that they fell short of being idolized like gods. (*Conquistador anónimo* 1858: 382–3)

Historians claim that the good order and political structures that guide the conduct of officials in America are unequaled even by the best that "primitive" Africa has to offer.

In the performing arts, historians celebrated the native repertoire as reminiscent of ceremonial compositions of Europe and the cultures of antiquity. For example, Fernández de Oviedo assesses the call of the ritualistic dance, the *areíto*:

> The *tequina* takes certain steps forward and backward, as in a true country dance. This manner of simultaneously singing and dancing . . . greatly resembles the form of songs set to music that farmers and townsfolk use when in summer they gather . . . ; and in Flanders I have also seen this form or type of singing and dancing (1963: 49–50).

The propensity for music leads the natives to translate into their tongue "our compositions and tunes, such as octaves and *romances* and *redondillas*" (Acosta 1880: 317). These accolades apply also to architecture and dramatic and fine arts, where "they design and draw everything in Roman style" (Carvajal 1955: 81). Native crafts, jewelry, and smithery are arenas of prowess worthy of admiration: "In our Spain the greatest silversmiths should observe this" (Díaz del Castillo 1974: 169). In their application of the martial arts, the Indians display a resourcefulness that historians say overshadows the material, moral, and spiritual reasons that ensured their defeat.

> I do not not know why I write thus, so lukewarmly, for some three or four soldiers, who had served in Italy, swore to God that they had never seen such fierce fights, not even between Christians and against the artillery of the King of France, or of the Great Turk. (Díaz del Castillo 1974: 249–50)

With English-style bows and the ability to ward-off enemy attacks "as if they were raised in Italy and in constant war" (Núñez Cabeza de Vaca 1986: 93), the Indians inspire their European Other to reappraise the initial evaluation of them as docile. Chroniclers intimate that the Indians practiced an ideal of city planning common to Europe and America, where architectural triumphs of the New World rank favorably with those of the Old: "There are large cities, especially Taxcala, which in some aspects resemble Granada, and in others Segovia. There is another city called Huexocingo that resembles Burgos" (*Conquistador anónimo* 1858: 388). House construction "is in the same manner and style of roofing of hamlets and villages in Flanders" (Fernández de Oviedo 1963: 51), and houses are spread throughout the countryside in the manner found in Gelves.

Such comparisons provide readers with a perceptible equivalent for translating an abstract portrait of the natives into a concrete, familiar one. Yet the emotional charge behind these descriptions also encourages readers to relate to the text through different empathetic valences: "You should understand hereafter," "You who are ignorant or doubtful," "Your opinions could not be firm," and "I leave to your discreet and gentle considerations" (Hariot 1971: A3–B3). The enigma ceases to be unfamiliar when viewed through analogy. Writers represent factual events or elements through credible links with a shared sense of reality; they attempt to transfer their sense of understanding to their readers through a logical continuum of knowledge and meaningful contiguity. In turn, readers rely on the conventional structures of their world in order to exploit the "metaphoric similarities between sets of real cases" (White 1978: 91).

Analogies are sometimes accompanied by qualifications that vary in degree of severity:

> This land of New Spain is similar to Spain, and the mountains, valleys and plains are *almost* the same, except that the mountain ranges are more temperate and rough . . . The dress of these people is blankets similar to cotton sheets, *although* not as large. (*Conquistador anónimo* 1858: 369)

Using additional conjunctions and adverbs, writers strive for the same effect: grains of corn are "almost as thick as garbanzos"; pigs, unlike those of Spain, lack canines and are "somewhat smaller than ours"; the leaf of the yucca plant is "the same as the hemp leaf, except that it is larger and thicker" (Fernández de Oviedo 1963: 28–9). The result of this arrangement is that the text "reworks the spatial divisions which underlie and organize a culture. For these socio- or ethnocultural boundaries to be changed, reinforced, or disrupted, a space of interplay is needed, one that establishes the text's difference, makes possible its operations and gives it 'credibility' in the eyes of its readers" (Certeau 1986: 67–8).

With respect to cultural typography, writers create striking comparisons between Indians and other races or ethnic groups; there is particular focus on the literal outcasts of Spain: Jews and Moors. Not only does Spain's recently waged campaign against the "infidels" find a logical extension in America, it also creates a poignant backdrop for visualizing the Indian; first-hand knowledge of and contact with Jewish and Moorish conventions allow writers to discharge a host of observations and conjectures. Preestablished truth, experience, and narrative authority suffice to liken both Indian and Moor: "The same as the Moors, their laws are combined in old songs, through which they rule themselves, like the Moors through their writing" (Pané 1974: 34); "They should be good Christians, and not false like the Moriscos of Granada, to whom their rivals and detractors compare them" (Mendieta 1971: 426). The indigenes, like the Moors, are polygamous; their sacrifice of beasts, according to ancient ceremony, "is the same that the Moors have" (Acosta 1880: 246).

No less influential is testimony that evaluates native society and juxtaposes it to Jewish law. According to Durán, the natives "observed the practice [of not drinking] as rigorously and to such an extreme as Jews do in not eating pork . . . And they performed the solemnity and festival that I have spoken of in the same manner and style that formerly Jews in ancient laws celebrated the jubilee year" (Durán 1967: 35, 221). Motolinía refers to rituals the inhabitants share with Jews, Moors, and gentiles, illustrating how Eurpoeans perceived and understood the new Other:

> Some Spaniards adjudge them to be of Moorish lineage. Others, owing to some causes and conditions that they see in them, say that they are of Jewish lineage; but the most common opinion is that they are all gentiles. (Motolinía 1969: 8)

In the image that results, commentators construe Indian rites as a composite of all three religions, yet they still regard these rites with apprehension: "The original strangeness, mystery, or exoticism of the events is dispelled, and they take on a

familiar aspect, not in their details, but in their functions as elements of a familiar kind of configuration" (White 1978: 86).

Another type of comparison suggests that the natives, in traditions and appearance, favor other peoples, ancient or exotic, who remain forever indelible through the "general notions of [their] forms" (White 1978: 86). Observers reference the archetypes of Africa, Asia, and classical civilizations: "They do not tattoo themselves, nor have they given way to such a ceremony, like many in Ethiopia and the East" (Acosta 1880: 61); "I think that these Inca of Peru should be preferred, not only over the Chinese and Japanese and Indians from the East, but also over native gentiles of Asia and Greece" (Garcilaso 1985: 179). Allusions to Jews, Moors, the ancients, and non-European nations lead to declarations that the particulars of seemingly distinct cultures are similar. In what approaches to a psychosocial estimation of one of Mexico's many tribes, Motolinía compares the inhabitants of Tehuacán to the peoples of diverse regions of Spain:

> These people are docile and very sincere, of good temperament, more than the Mexicans; just as in Spain, in Old Castile and more toward Burgos, they are affable and of *bene indolis*, and they seem like a different group of people than from Ciudad Rodrigo toward Extremadura and Andalucía, who are more introverted and unpleasant; thus one can state here that Mexicans and their territories are like Estremenians and Andalusians. (Motolinía 1969: 109)

The sympathetic and perspectival reconciliation in these summative cultural comparisons reveal the perimeters of the historiographer's *weltanschauung*. Spain remains the principal focus for determining meaning, be it self-referential: "the organization of market places in New Spain is like that in my land, which is Medina del Campo" (Díaz del Castillo 1974: 171), or non-reflexive:

> The Indians of that province [Santo Evangelio] wear sandals like those of Franciscans . . . They wear shirts like the Spaniards, with a collar . . . and for a cape they wear a long cotton blanket . . . like the blankets the Gypsies use in Castile; they also wear hats like the Spaniards. (Ponce 1873: 105)

A final construct involves cross-references, where indigenous customs of one region of Mexico are collateral to those of another region of the same, or of another indigenous nation:

> The Amazons had their ears perforated . . . like the Indians of Cuzco. (Carvajal 1955: 82)
>
> Near Veracruz is a very large province . . . that was as large as Texcoco. (Aguilar 1954: 88)
>
> Popayán . . . comparing it with the abundance of Peru, is a hamlet like those in Asturias, comparing it to the court of Our Highness, who resides in Madrid. (Descobar 1976: 112)

New elements that writers experience – which are not easily describable to readers and are external to the writers' worldview – generally evoke Old World, familiar (internal) references. But the latter create a limited context for comparison, particularly when the two entities under study are unfamiliar to readers. To state, as does Díaz del Castillo (1974: 142), that the Indians of Cholula dress like those of Zapotecas, begs the question of the readership's familiarity with one or both native groups. The issue is one of representation: historians in new circumstances coming to terms with new realities while struggling with the inadequacy of their frame of reference.

Although no scheme could properly distinguish the intricacies of relationships to be found in the chronicle as a genre, it should be pointed out that the Old World, internal to the consciousness of chroniclers, has fixed boundaries and a static population. Elements of the New World, external to the reporters' frame of reference, suggest fluidity because they are unfixed in the consciousness of testimonial writers. The new realities manage to destabilize internal references to the extent that the New World comes to exist independently of the Old. The construct of frames of reference poses another unaddressed problem for the seductive discourse of early American historiography.

Even the description of the land is tied to the prevailing European construct of measurement, where the size, height, and girth (linked to age) of Europeans help to define the unfamiliar:

> There are certain trees that have leaves as thick as a man's leg at the knee and a long arm. The trunk reaches almost twice or thrice the height of a man, and the thickness of a seven- or eight-year old boy... They build a square tower the height of two men, and they construct stairs until they reach the height of two men; and in the middle they begin two other towers that reach the height of ten or twelve bodies. (*Conquistador anónimo* 1858: 369)

Flints wielded in sacrificial rites are "as wide as a hand and 16 inches long" (Núñez Cabeza de Vaca 1986: 85); incisions inflicted on the body are large enough to accommodate "a noose as thick as an arm at the wrist" (Motolinía 1969: 40); and of indigenous nuts Hariot claims "some are of the bigness of a man's head" (Hariot 1971: C4). These multipliers allow readers to decipher land tropes by relating them to a tangible reality: the human body. The figure writers used as an instrument of measurement is the reader. The European standard of *jeme* (distance from the end of the thumb to the end of the forefinger, both extended), *palmo* (measure of 8 inches), *braza* (a fathom) for determining the basic unit of a quantity remains the same, yet it must now take into account the Other, whose body type, according to Fernández de Oviedo (1963: 27, 41), is "of somewhat less stature than commonly found in Spain," yet "they are bigger than Germans." In one instance, Fernández de Oviedo (1963: 28) relates that, in the process of reducing grains of corn to flour, a native "picks up a stick as tall as he is." At this point, the New World that has now become self-referential, no

longer dependent on Old World constructs to fashion reality and meaning, seduces the chronicler's gaze and subverts his notion of what is "objective."

Since measurement supplies data for establishing new hypotheses and for testing and reappraising more venerable theories, it is essential that writers detail it precisely. The aforementioned conventional constructs are mere estimations, approximations of what people accepted as "real." The alternative lies in reorganizing European knowledge and culture to assimilate a new reference: America. The New World detaches signs from their meaning and corrects the historian's ability to describe using his extant knowledge base. As Foucault has explained: "It is not because people believed in such relations that they set about trying to hunt down all the analogies in the world. But there was a necessity lying at the heart of their knowledge: they had to find an adjustment between the infinite richness of a resemblance introduced as a third term between signs and their meaning" (Foucault 1970: 31–2).

I have tried to show how terminological poverty and conceptual lacunae influence the production of new-world chronicles. Conventional analogical forms eventually validate the catalogue of American events, which were initially unfamiliar to writers and readers. In response to this material abundance, historians of the New World adopted an abundance of metaphors and analogues to underscore the elements of newness and mystery encountered by explorers. As a result, the complex rhetorical devices they employed have enriched this body of writing. We need to understand the use (process and creation) of these devices in order to appreciate and reevaluate early colonial historiography.

Note

All translations are mine unless an English language edition is cited.

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32
Republican Theatricality and Transatlantic Empire

Elizabeth Maddock Dillon

And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid?

Benjamin Franklin, Constitutional Convention, 1787

Introduction: New World Drama

Early American literature is a field constructed in retrospect: texts written and circulated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in British North America can be construed as "American" (part of the canon of US literature) only insofar as one looks back upon them from the vantage of US nationhood. Given the cultural and historical force of precisely this nationalist perspective, it is no surprise that literary studies of the colonial and early national periods have primarily involved the sifting of literary texts for signs of nascent and burgeoning "American" identity. Yet critical work on early North American drama in English has been particularly stymied by such an approach because much of the drama staged and circulated in the pre-national and early US national periods was written and first performed in England rather than America, thus causing critics to regard it as English rather than American literature. Examining the performance history of early American drama enables a markedly different picture of literature of the period to emerge – one in which literature is defined less by nationhood than by a larger, transatlantic network of economic, political, and cultural relations. In this essay, I step away from the neat (although anachronistic) conjunction of nation and literature that has guided critical work in the field of early American literature in order to examine the form and meaning of dramatic texts and performances in relation to a transatlantic nexus of ideas and debates concerning the politics of republicanism and imperialism during the first British Empire in both England and North America.

Roman Republic, Roman Empire

Joseph Addison's play *Cato* first appeared on the stage in London in 1713. The drama centers on the heroic demise of the Roman republican senator Cato as he is besieged by the advancing armies of the tyrannical Julius Caesar. In its central focus on Roman republicanism (in the figure of Cato) and Roman empire (in the figure of Julius Caesar), the play exemplifies early eighteenth-century British interest in the politics of republicanism and imperialism as well as a characteristic turn to the historical and literary example of Rome for inspiration in sorting through the meaning of these terms. Although Addison was known for his Whig (anti-absolutist, social contractarian) politics at the time, *Cato* evidently held bi-partisan appeal for London audiences who enthusiastically endorsed the play's patriotic sentiments (Cowan 2004; Loftis 1963). The play debuted toward the close of the War of Spanish Succession and both Whig and Tory audience members sought to demonstrate their allegiance to the principles of liberty and love of country that the play trumpeted. Samuel Johnson famously reports that when the play first appeared, the Whigs applauded every time the word "liberty" was mentioned in order to "satirize" the Tories; the Tories, in turn, "echoed every clap to show that the satire was unfelt" (Johnson, Trotter, and Reynolds 1783 II: 348). *Cato* had an equally important afterlife in the colonies of North America, including, most notably, a performance for and by the weary troops of George Washington's army at Valley Forge in 1778 (Furtwangler 1980; Fuller 1999). Theater had been banned by the first Continental Congress in 1774, together with gambling, horseracing, cock-fighting, and extravagant funerals. The passage of the ban occurred in response to Britain's Coercive Acts and was joined with a trade embargo against Great Britain and non-consumption rules governing the sale of British commodities; the ban was intended to foster virtue through discipline, and, in a proto-nationalist mode, to wean the colonists from British corruption and luxury (Withington 1991; Silverman 1986). It is worth noting that a fair amount of theater was performed during the Revolution, including the performance of *Cato* at Valley Forge (Brown 1995). Notwithstanding the ban on theater, George Washington was an avid fan of theater and *Cato* was a favorite play of his and of the broader public as well. *Cato* was performed often in professional and amateur venues from 1732 through the 1790s (Shaffer 2003; Litto 1966). Nathan Hale's celebrated last words as he faced execution by the British – "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country" – cite Cato's words in Addison's play: "What pity is it / That we can die but once to serve our country!" (4.3.91–2). As Jason Shaffer has argued, Hale surely knew the play and may have even participated in performing it while he was a student at Yale (Shaffer 2003: 6). Furthermore, historian Bernard Bailyn has influentially argued that a "Catonic image" (an image of oppositional republican virtue) was central to the political theory of the American Revolution, an image derived from both Addison's well-known play and the popularity of John Trenchard and Richard Gordon's *Cato's Letters* – a series of newspaper columns extolling freedom of speech, the right to

property, and the dangers of government corruption – that were widely circulated and cited in the colonies (Bailyn 1992:44).

Cato is thus a dramatic text that migrated from metropole to colony and exerted considerable cultural influence in both locations. My interest in this essay lies in the transatlantic migration and staging of this play and more specifically in what I will argue is the *mobility of republicanism* at the center of the play. Ultimately, I suggest, the mobility of republican political identity serves as the basis of a developing ideology of empire. While the politics of republicanism within the play seem antithetical to imperialism, I argue that a transatlantic performance history of *Cato* enables one to trace a shifting and developing ideology of imperialism that indicates, in turn, how and why colonial North Americans – far from repudiating imperialism – sought to link republic and empire. While objecting to their subordinate position within the British Empire, many colonials came to believe, with Thomas Jefferson, that the United States could and should conjoin imperialism with republicanism to form an American "empire for liberty" (Jefferson to James Madison, April 27, 1809). While a number of critics have analyzed and contextualized performances of *Cato* both in England and the colonies (Freeman 1999; Rosenthal 1999; Aravamudan 1999; Ellison 1999), my particular interest lies in connecting the dots between English and colonial performances of *Cato* and in thereby discerning the relation between republican ideology and empire – that is, in focusing specifically on the nature and meaning of the transatlantic migration of the play and the way in which its varied performances staged the developing ideology of empire in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, when Addison's *Cato* was written and first staged, the British had occupied territory in North America and the West Indies for close to one hundred years; moreover, a growing sense of the importance of this colonial arena to the welfare of England occasioned debate over the nature of empire itself. Nicholas Canny has characterized the first British Empire – the (primarily) Atlantic commercial and territorial empire in the period prior to the American Revolution – as "more the product of accident than design." Long-distance trade evolved into empire, Canny suggests, and "shape was imposed on what had been accomplished by chance only after state authorities came to appreciate the commercial importance of the various colonies, fortified posts, and trading routes throughout the world that had been established by private adventurers" (Canny 1998: xi). In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, then, both the state and the English people became increasingly aware of Britain's imperial nature and began to publicly debate the nature of empire as well as its benefits and dangers for English liberty. As numerous scholars have demonstrated, the English turned to classical example in attempts to understand the relation between republican ideals and imperial ambitions (Orr 2001; Pagden 1995; Weinbrot 1993; Armitage 2000). If the Roman republic served as the mythical origin of British liberty, the Roman Empire, in turn, served as a cautionary example of the danger that expansion posed to the republican state. The *libertas* of the Roman state was ultimately destroyed by *imperium* – by the overweening

ambitions of Sulla, Marius, and finally the tyrannical Julius Caesar. According to this argument, the extension of territorial empire through military force ultimately overburdens the republican state to the point that the military becomes the location of despotic power and excess rather than the protector of freedom. As David Armitage writes: "for the classical – above all, Roman – historical and moral traditions within which the majority of early-modern British theorists had been educated, *libertas* and *imperium* remained seemingly incompatible values . . . the problem of how to achieve empire while sustaining liberty became a defining concern of British imperial ideology" (Armitage 2000: 125). Thus, in 1701, the economic theorist Charles Davenant (son of Restoration playwright William Davenant) explained that "while Common wealths thus extend their limits, they are working their own Bane, for all big Empires determine in a single Person" (Davenant 1771: 3–4; cited in Pagden 1995: 17). Expansive empire led directly to tyranny and away from liberty.

Addison's *Cato* centers precisely on the mytho-historical transition from Roman republic to Roman empire, as the republican leader Cato commits suicide in the face of his inability to prevent Caesar's corrupt and imperialist takeover. As James Johnson writes, the history of Cato "marked the end of Republican Rome and the birth of the new imperialistic stage of Roman history" (Johnson 1967: 95–6). Addison's play is set in Utica, a colonial outpost in North Africa, where the Roman senator Cato and his allies, including his two sons and his daughter Marcia, are encamped, awaiting the seemingly fatal attack of Caesar's oncoming forces. Yet much of the plot centers on a figure other than Cato, namely, the Numidian Prince Juba, who has aligned himself with Cato and is also in love with Cato's daughter, Marcia. Both Cato's fellow senator and apparent ally – Sempronius – and Juba's own general, Syphax, are in fact conspiring against the Republican cause in favor of Caesar. Juba resists both Sempronius' villainy and Syphax's anti-Roman oratory: Syphax attempts to dissuade Juba from his adoration of Cato and all things Republican – not least of which is Marcia. It is thus worth noting that significant plot strands of the play are centered on romance, sedition, and the figure of Juba. Cato, meanwhile, demonstrates Stoic fortitude in his commitment to the republic above his commitment to his family: most famously, when his son Marcus dies in battle, Cato does not mourn; however, he does shed tears for the death of the Republic. At the close of the play he tragically turns his sword upon himself as Caesar approaches; as he dies, he gives his consent to Juba to marry his daughter Marcia. One possible, if not unavoidable reading of the play, then, would center on the incompatibility of liberty and empire. Cato's tragic death points to the danger posed to the republic of imperial ambition in the figure of Caesar. Cato, for many commentators on the play, represents an ideal figure of republican virtue who stands in stark contrast to Caesar's imperial villainy.

Yet, as Lisa Freeman argues, such a reading is problematic insofar as it idealizes Cato despite the fact that, with his suicide, he enacts the failure of republicanism rather than its triumph. More importantly, as Freeman points out, any simple idealization of Cato and republicanism requires that one ignore the romance plots within the play, and in particular, depends upon overlooking a significant element of

the play's resolution, namely the union of Juba and Marcia. Eighteenth-century critics, as well as later commentators, have been quite content to discount Juba's role in the play: as Freeman indicates, contemporary critics objected to the love scenes as derogations of the heroic plot line centered on Cato. Indeed, Freeman analyzes a Bowdlerized version of the play that was written some years later in which all of the love scenes were excised – a play titled *Cato Without the Love Scenes*. A focus on the union of Marcia and Juba transforms the meaning of the play considerably, however, shifting its terms from tragedy to include an additional element of comedy or futurity: a future horizon opens in the marriage of Juba and Marcia within the play despite the loss of horizon that the death of Cato and the Republican state would seem to imply. Freeman reads the future possibility inaugurated with the marriage of Juba and Marcia as indexing a transition from public to private concern that is markedly nationalist: "The almost tragicomic conclusion of Addison's *Cato* thus signals a turn away from the larger-than-life aspirations and dreams of empire toward the domestic and private as the grounds for developing the virtue and strength of the nation" (Freeman 1999: 466). On this reading, the critique of imperialism within the play is articulated not only through the tyrannical figure of Caesar and the tragic death of Cato, but also more redemptively through the vindication of domestic, privatized virtue in the form of marriage. The domestic and implicitly nationalized scene of marriage stands as a bulwark against the ravages of heroic and imperial drama.

I cite Freeman's argument in order to emphasize the importance of both Juba and the romance plot to the play, but I would argue that this aspect of the play's resolution does not necessarily point in the direction of nationalism so much as toward a new account of empire. Specifically, I would suggest that the play offers up the possibility of a republican empire – an empire in which *libertas* and *imperium* are not at odds. My reading of republican empire in the play hinges on the dying words of Cato in which he sanctions Juba's marriage to Marcia. As he speaks to Marcia, Cato redefines what it means to be a Roman: "Juba loves thee, Marcia. / A senator of Rome, while Rome survived, / Would not have matched his daughter with a king, / But Caesar's arms have thrown down all distinction. / Whoe'er is brave and virtuous is a Roman" (5.4.87–91). In this brief passage, the meaning of the word "Rome" shifts from referencing a geographical location to referencing a political ideal that is no longer associated with geography but rather with individual character and sentiment. Rome has two different meanings within a single line: "A senator of Rome, while Rome survived." The first Rome is a place, the second is the realization of a political ideal. Rome as a city certainly survives, but it is no longer the embodied location of republicanism. What seems crucial is the fact that Rome is both derealized and realized at once here; it is derealized as a geographically located Republic in the world, but it is realized as a new form of highly mobile and internalizable ideal of virtue. Rome no longer produces Romans; rather, Romans (individuals) carry some notion of Rome within. *Rome* (republican liberty) now exists both nowhere and everywhere; it is dispersed across an imperial horizon.

Why might one characterize this virtualization of Roman republican identity as imperialist or related to forms of empire? In the prologue to the play, written by Alexander Pope and spoken by Juba, we are told that Addison "bids our breasts with ancient ardor rise, / And calls forth Roman drops from British eyes" (15–16). Pope thus suggests that Roman teardrops have a metaphorical and thus mobile status: they can literally appear in British eyes because to be Roman is to subscribe to an ideal rather than to be associated with a place. Moreover, one might infer that British eyes are British, not because of their relation to a geographically defined Britain, but because of their capacity to shed Roman teardrops: British eyes are British because they shed Roman tears. In this version of empire, persons rather than territories are colonized. As such, the ancient Roman version of empire as military tyranny and state over-extension is no longer necessary: an imperial army, for instance, is no longer needed for the control of territorial acquisitions. On this model, persons (and their emotions) produce geography rather than vice versa. This enables both the deterritorialization and reterritorialization of the world: Britishness inheres in the weeping eye of the republican.

In the remainder of this essay, I aim to give substance to this reading of the play by suggesting that such a reading makes far more sense or, one might say, has more force from the perspective of a seat in the Philadelphia theater than one in the London theater. Although Whig and Tory audience members may have competed with one another in London as to who could clap the loudest – who could signal most forcefully their allegiance to the ideals of Rome and thus to Britishness – I would suggest that, figuratively speaking, colonials might have had reason to clap even louder than the Whigs and Tories. In other words, the concept of a mobile British-republican identity, lodged in one's heart and tear ducts, might have had the strongest allure for those individuals who saw themselves as the heirs of English liberty far from the soil of England. In what follows, then, I adduce a number of examples of the importance of the *mobility* of republican sentiment for the colonial staging of *Cato* and for a theory of empire that held significant sway in colonial North America and the early US republic.

Cato Reborn

In the colonial context, critics have typically translated the figure of Cato into the American patriot who resists the tyranny of a British Caesar. The Valley Forge performance of *Cato* has assumed iconic status in this respect: George Washington is seen to emblematize an American Cato in the eyes of his troops and the colonial public. Albert Furtwangler, for example, writes that it "is certain . . . that Washington did see the play at Valley Forge, and that it called attention to his own character" (Furtwangler 1980: 50); Jason Shaffer writes that "the performance renewed the vows of loyalty between Washington and the Continental Army" (Shaffer 2003: 19).

Moreover, Shaffer, among others, argues that Washington "fashioned a public image based on . . . a Catonic stoicism . . . a form of performance in everyday life underscored by Washington's fondness for quoting *Cato* in his official and personal correspondence" (ibid: 18–19). Interestingly enough, however, Washington, at the age of 26, describes himself as identifying with the figure of Juba rather than with Cato. While serving in the French and Indian Wars, he writes a somewhat amorous letter to the wife of his best friend, Sally Fairfax: "I should think our time more agreeably spent believe me, in playing a part in *Cato*, with the company you mention, and myself doubly happy in being the Juba to such a Marcia, as you must make" (Washington et al. 1931 II: 193). Historians and critics have tended to dismiss Washington's specific identification with Juba in favor of a presumptive identification between Washington and Cato. Garry Wills, for instance, describes Washington's identification with Juba as youthful errata: "Though Washington could identify himself with Juba in his youth, the play's obvious moral paradigm is its title character" (Wills 1984: 135). From a contemporary perspective, it is evidently difficult to imagine Washington not as the great white father but as the weeping African prince, in large part because of the racial dynamics at stake in that image. Clearly, Washington's reference to Juba primarily concerns romance rather than race or even politics: like Juba, Washington seeks the love of a woman he is forbidden to approach. Yet I would suggest that the dynamics of racialization (so evident from our perspective) may be less salient in Washington's reference to Juba than the condition of coloniality. In other words, perhaps Washington's identification with Juba is facilitated by his shared position as the creole subject of empire, a subject of empire who claims a right to Roman liberty by virtue of his peripheral relation to England within the British Empire. As the subject of empire, and particularly as the willing and even heroic subject of *republican* empire, Washington in the role of Juba makes as much sense as, and perhaps more sense than, Washington in the role of Cato.

Washington, moreover, was not alone in his reference to Juba. While images of and references to Cato had enormous currency in colonial North America, so too did the figure of Juba. Specifically, Juba's words in a dialogue within the play with his Numidian general, Syphax, attained paradigmatic status in early America. In the dialogue, Syphax (who is secretly conspiring against Cato) attacks Juba's worshipful regard for Cato and Roman virtue by recourse to what we might call cultural nationalism or nativism. Syphax asks Juba: "Where is the worth that sets this people [Romans] up / Above your own Numidia's tawny sons? / Do they with tougher sinews bend the bow? / Or flies the javelin swifter to its mark, / Launch'd from the vigor of a Roman arm?" (1.253–7). Syphax argues that Juba should be loyal to his noble father and to the African people rather than to Cato. Juba responds that his admiration and loyalty is dictated by Cato's transcendent virtue rather than by any physical condition of his own birth or the strength of his soldiers. Responding to Syphax's account of the Numidian soldiers' physical force, Juba states:

> These [abilities of the soldiers] all are virtues of a meaner rank,
> Perfections that are plac'd in bones and nerves.
> A Roman soul is bent on higher views:
> To civilize the rude unpolish'd world,
> To lay it under the restraint of laws;
> To make men mild, and sociable to man;
> To cultivate the wild licentious savage
> With wisdom, discipline, and liberal arts;
> The establishment of life: virtues like these
> Make human nature shine, reform the soul,
> And break our fierce barbarians into men.
> (1.263–73)

Here Juba is the figure of creole civility: unconstrained by his physical location in the world – by his identity as an African – Juba is capable, as Cato tells him later in the play, of exhibiting a "Roman soul" (4.3.48). This dialogue was reprinted in countless editions of speech manuals and textbooks for young men and women in early America, including Noah Webster's *A Grammatical Institute of the English Language: An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking* (1790); Dana Joseph's *A New Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking* (1794); and Caleb Bingham's *The American Preceptor* (1796). The central didactic message of the dialogue that the textbooks aimed to convey concerns the nobility of rising above geographical and physical constraint to obtain transcendent forms of virtue and civility. Juba's words resonate with imperialist ideology, invoking, for instance, the invidious distinction between civility and barbarism that will, during a later stage of British and American imperialism, take familiar discursive shape as the doctrine of the "white man's burden." What is striking at this moment, however, is early American interest in identifying with Juba's cause – in finding Juba's Roman soul to be exemplary for the creole colonial struggling for position in the first British Empire and for the early American national seeking to claim legitimacy as the heir of English liberty and Roman republicanism.

Viewing Juba rather than Cato alone as exemplary is thus a significant interpretive move with respect to the politics of imperialism. As Julie Ellison has persuasively argued, Catonic discourse is embodied less in the singular figure of the republican hero than in a "cluster of narrative or dramatic relationships": "Cato's discourse comprises not a discrete set of beliefs or attitudes, but a recurring arrangement of positions defined by the interdependent presence and absence of gendered sentiment" (Ellison 1999: 73). The affective force of the masculine sentimental bond between Juba and Cato arises from the displacement of the father–son bond onto the ideal of the Republic as Cato weeps not for his son Marcus' death but for that of the Republic. Thus, while the heroic Cato dies, his republican ideals gain affective force in the figure of Juba: republicanism here consists in the combination of Cato's stoicism and Juba's sentiment. Ellison's observations concerning the plotline of republicanism are particularly salient in colonial North America, where the role of Juba had resonance for

those living on the periphery of empire. A 1744 volume of poetry published in Boston includes the anonymous verse, "Written in the back Leaf of Mr. Addison's CATO: Given to a Lady," which idealizes Juba as a man who has "all great Cato's soul dilat[ing] his breast." The poet describes Marcia and Juba as the "happy pair" that "alone shall prove / The finish'd transports of immortal love." Far from rewriting the play without the love scenes, early Americans looked to Juba's sustained sentiment for both Cato and his daughter, Marcia, as evidence of their own position as the bearers of republican virtue – as those who might, like Marcia and Juba, embody the future life of republican ideals.

Additional colonial reference to Cato and the mobility of republicanism in the play is evident in the so-called liberty funerals – street theater that took place in colonial urban centers during the Stamp Act Crisis in which mock funerals for the figure of Liberty were publicly staged. As Shaffer indicates, these funerals often consciously deployed Catonic imagery: "In the pageant of the liberty funeral, Britain represents the advancing, offstage Caesar; Freedom stands in for Cato, the sacrificial symbol of patriotism" (Shaffer 2003: 14). And indeed, at least one newspaper described such a funeral with specific reference to Addison's *Cato*: Cato is thus explicitly a figure for the death of liberty. Yet, however strong the analogy, the liberty funerals often included a significant twist on Addison's *Cato*. Rather than remaining supine for interment, the figure of Freedom occasionally emerged from the coffin in the final stages of the street drama, and emerged specifically in the figure of a young woman. At the close of the dramatic parade, Freedom stood up from the coffin "in the form of a young woman, 'Liberty Revived,' prompting a festival celebration of Liberty breaking out of Old Freedom's Catonic chrysalis" (Shaffer 2003: 15). The transformation of Freedom from the dead figure of Cato to the living figure of a young woman mirrors the displacement of liberty from Cato's sword to Juba's breast. As Cato states, "Caesar's arms have thrown down all distinction" – that is, liberty is now free to migrate into the breast of a Numidian prince or a North American maiden: indeed, it may best be lodged in this dislocated and reborn figure rather than in the morbid image of Cato, who is unable to separate the Rome within from the dying Rome without.

American Empire

Jack Greene has argued that the first British Empire (prior to the American Revolution) has been significantly misrepresented by historians who "used the coercive and centralized model of imperial organization derived from late nineteenth and early twentieth-century empires" to understand (or misunderstand) earlier forms of Atlantic empire (Greene 2002: 268). On the later model, power flows from a metropolitan center and subjugates a colonial population. Yet this model does not apply to the earlier period, Greene argues, which might be better conceptualized in relation to the form of composite monarchy in which states negotiated relations

of amalgamation and incorporation. In the case of the British Empire of the eighteenth century, the principle relation of amalgamation was above all commercial: ties of commerce bound the periphery to the metropole. However, this commercial logic was understood to be related to liberty as well: rather than a coercive metropolitan force controlling the colony, voluntary relations of trade united colony and metropole. According to David Armitage, this notion of empire – a commercial empire uniting *libertas* and *imperium* – is one which not only was *not* forcibly imposed upon a colonial population by metropolitan muscle, but also originated in the periphery itself:

> The concept of the British Empire as a congeries of territories linked by their commerce, united with common interests and centered politically upon London, was . . . originally provincial, and arose among unionists in Ireland, planters in the Caribbean and officials in the mainland colonies over the course of the first quarter of the eighteenth century. It was the product above all of a group of colonial administrators, merchants and politicians, for whom an appeal to a common interest with Britain was a necessary strategy to encourage equal treatment for their compatriots . . . Their strategic use of the British Empire as the conceptual realization of these interests explains the widespread use among these provincials for the language of the common good, frequently cast . . . in the idiom of neo-Roman republicanism. (Armitage 2000: 181–2)

Armitage thus reverses the vector of power that is typically ascribed to colonial ideology of empire: rather than emanating from the metropole, the ideology of empire, on this account, arises in the periphery and is adopted in the metropole. In somewhat different terms, Kathleen Wilson has documented the popular understanding of commercial empire in England during the mid-eighteenth century, identifying a widespread vernacular adoption, in different locations within England and in the colonial periphery, of the language of commerce, liberty, and empire (Wilson 1994). It is important to stress the commercial nature of British empire as it developed in the eighteenth century, and the extent to which commerce was viewed as the terrain upon which *imperium* and *libertas* could be reconciled: the two merge, more specifically, in the model of commercial, maritime empire that the British increasingly come to embrace during this period. Moreover, it is significant that the commercial, maritime model of empire finesses the thorny problem of territorial occupation, and thus of military expansion (Armitage 2000). In its colonial incarnation, *Cato* has a similar effect of finessing the difficult issues of territorial occupation and military authority by transfiguring political authority into republican sentiment – into an idiom, as Ellison emphasizes, of emotion that does political work. The idiom of neo-Roman republicanism – of creole republicanism embodied in the figure of Juba, and in the marriage of Juba and Marcia – held enormous appeal for a colonial population who used this account of empire to assert their right to British liberty, and, eventually, to British territory in North America as well. The mobility of republican sentiment in *Cato* bears resemblance to the doctrine of commercial, maritime empire insofar as it emphasizes voluntary relations of amalgamation (marriage, republican allegiance

among diverse peoples) as well as mobility and expansiveness: yet, significantly, the concept of republican empire at stake in *Cato* is neither commercial nor maritime, save by analogy. As such, Catonic discourse served, in colonial North America, to articulate claims of empire that eventually took on territorial dimensions. In American hands and hearts, as I suggest below, the affective bonds of republicanism were used to elaborate and sustain the colonials' claims to rightful ownership and rule of North American land.

In the periphery, then, Cato takes on a new life, emerging from Liberty's coffin in a new shape and form. Significantly, this born-again colonial Cato has markedly imperial aspirations, or what we might call republican-imperial aims. In early American history and literary criticism, the figure of Cato is viewed as emblematic of patriotic heroism and resistance to the over-reaching aims of British empire. Yet, as I have indicated, the inflection that Cato and Catonic language assumes in the colonies concerns less the singular figure of Cato than that of Juba as well, addressing, in particular, the capacity for Roman-ness to migrate from the body of Cato to that of Juba – for republicanism to be reborn in a new body, and in a body that is located in the periphery of empire. As we have seen, George Washington imagines himself as Juba, and Cato is reborn as a young woman in liberty funerals. A similar transmigration of Catonic imagery across lines of race and gender occurs in the plays of Mercy Otis Warren: in this instance, however, Catonic discourse is more clearly linked to a doctrine of *dominium* or territorial empire. As such, Catonic language articulates both resistance to British empire and the assertion of a new, American territorial empire. Warren cites Addison's *Cato* in the epigraph of her play *The Adulateur* (1773), a play about the Boston Massacre that presents the colonists as republicans and the British as rapacious "tools" of tyranny. Cato speaks the passage she cites in the epigraph, as he awaits defeat at the hands of Caesar:

> Then let us rise my friends, and strive to fill
> This little interval, this pause of life,
> (While yet our liberty and fates are doubtful)
> With resolution, friendship, Roman bravery,
> And all the virtues we can crowd into it;
> That Heav'n may say it ought to be prolong'd.
> (2. 219–24; Warren 1918: 228)

Read in the context of British North America, the epigraph seems aimed at opening a new space – at not simply making use of an interval before death, but *prolonging* the interval such that it becomes the location of a new life. The play itself focuses on the heroic efforts of American patriots to remain true to Roman republican ideals despite the corruption of British ruling forces (especially Governor Thomas Hutchinson). Warren thus seems to open both a temporal and geographical space for Roman liberty in the colonies of North America which will outlive the death of liberty in the hands of the English.

In a second play, Warren similarly points to a new geography of republican liberty. *The Group* (1775) satirizes the essentially venal nature of the British who are occupying Boston before the revolution. Their task, as they connive together, is "To quench the generous spark, the innate love / Of glorious freedom planted in the breast / Of every man who boasts a Briton's name" (Warren 1995: 46). It is perhaps a familiar claim that the American revolutionary war was waged against Britain in the name of British liberties, yet Warren's language, in this instance, specifically invokes the *mobility* of republican sentiment that we have seen in *Cato*: glorious freedom is "planted in the breast" of all Britons, and most especially, as she indicates, in those Britons who occupy the periphery and are uncorrupted by its debased military culture. Further, the organic imagery of republican freedom "planted" in peripheral British breasts implies a relation between empire and territorial occupation that will emerge as central in the war between England and the colonies. In *The Group*, republican virtue seems to be more particularly, and naturally, lodged in the breast of colonial women who are able to figure the organic nature of republican sentiment, and to retain it, precisely as sentiment over and against a corrupt, military, masculine metropolitan authority.

One effect of the rebirth of liberty in Catonic terms that I have been tracing, then, is the association of liberty with empire (from the periphery) rather than simply with nationalism. Colonial Catoism concerns a mobile republican affect that remains associated with empire. In 1778 Jonathan Sewall penned an epilogue for a performance of Addison's *Cato* at the Bow Street Theater in Portsmouth, New Hampshire that points toward the association of an American *Cato* with an American territorial empire:

> In Caesar's days had [Cato's] daring mind
> With Washington's serenity been joined
> The tyrant then had bled, great Cato liv'd,
> And Rome in all her majesty surviv'd.
> Rise then, my countrymen! for fight prepare,
> Gird on your swords, and fearless rush to war!
> For your grieved country nobly dare to die,
> And empty all your veins for Liberty.
> No pent-up Utica contracts your pow'rs,
> But the whole boundless continent is yours!
> (Sewall 1890: 4–6)

In Sewall's epilogue, Washington is represented as both Cato (the Stoic hero) and Juba (the sentimental Republican heir). Washington outlives Caesar because of his "serenity" or emotional capacity to believe in Rome without setting foot in Rome; as a result, Rome survives as a new empire, or a theory of empire that circulates from London to Jamaica, to New York, to Portsmouth, and back to London. If Addison's *Cato* narrates the death of republicanism at the hands of Roman imperialism, the transatlantic migration of the play made clear the possibility of a revised version of

empire within the seeds of Cato's demise: Cato is given new life in the colonial setting and so too is an ideology of empire. If Warren's epigraphic use of Cato gestures toward the opening of a territorial, North American empire, Sewall's epilogue extends this territory with a sweeping wave toward the "whole boundless continent." The final line of Sewall's epilogue thus resonates, proleptically, with the doctrine of manifest destiny; less anachronistically, it articulates a concept of an American (territorial) empire that Thomas Jefferson will describe as an "empire for liberty."

Jefferson's idealization of empire follows from American criticism of the corrupt nature of the British Empire. In other words, Jefferson did not see American *nationalism* as the antidote to British imperialism; rather, he saw the federative principle joining the colonies in the United States as the basis of an improved imperialism that embodied enlightened republican principles rather than the metropolitan despotism practiced by the British. As Peter Onuf argues, Jefferson believed that "By vindicating their independence, American Revolutionaries would vindicate the imperial idea, the great legacy of antiquity and the great hope of progressive and enlightened peoples everywhere" (Onuf 2000: 59). However, this vision of peacefully united individuals living together on consensual terms was already contradicted by the condition of race slavery in the United States. Thus, if Jefferson's empire is one that gives pride of place to the periphery rather than the metropole, it is also one in which the migration of republican principles across racial lines has been halted. Although he condemns slavery, Jefferson also cannot imagine the integration of African Americans into the republic, and thus suggests that former slaves be deported from the new American empire. Jefferson is not always specific with respect to where African Americans should be resettled, but he proposes at one point that the West Indies and specifically St. Domingo might be appropriate places "beyond the limits of the United States to form a receptacle for these people," although "Africa would offer a last & undoubted resort" (Jefferson 1905 X: 297). He explicitly rejects the idea of locating a colony in the western territories of the US because, as Onuf points out, he imagines that the American people (a racialized, white people) will ultimately take possession of much of the hemisphere (Onuf 2000: 180). Jefferson writes in 1801: "However our present interests may restrain us within our limits, it is impossible not to look forward to distant times, when our rapid multiplication will expand itself beyond those limits, and cover the whole northern, if not the southern continent, with a people speaking the same language, governed in similar forms, and by similar laws" (Jefferson 1905 X: 297). As Onuf concludes, "Jefferson could not 'contemplate with satisfaction either blot or mixture' – the presence of Africans – 'on that surface' " (Onuf 2000: 181). Jefferson's account of empire is thus one that deploys the logic that animates Juba in Addison's *Cato* but rejects it as well. Jefferson views Americans as the heirs of Roman republicanism and an idealized British empire, and the account of mobile republicanism is crucial to this doctrine. On the other hand, Jefferson views race as an insuperable boundary to the mobility of republicanism in a manner that Addison and perhaps Washington, as well, did not.

As David Shields has persuasively argued, much of the language or discourse of imperialism that predominated in eighteenth-century Anglo-American letters (particularly in poetry and drama) has been summarily ignored by critics and historians of American literature. The mythology that America was never an empire, Shields suggests, has been so powerful as to occlude a field of literary production and discourse in the eighteenth century that was centrally concerned with empire (Shields 1990). Thus, in the field of American literature, critics have tended to leap from John Cotton to Ralph Waldo Emerson, with perhaps a glance at Jonathan Edwards en route: eighteenth-century letters have been overlooked because they do not contribute as much as one might wish toward the development of a nationalist American narrative. A consideration of the transatlantic *Cato*, however, indicates the complex developments and transformations of the concept of empire in the eighteenth century, both in England and in colonial North America. Further, it seems worth emphasizing that the ideologies of imperialism that circulated during the first British Empire are not unrelated to the doctrines of US nationalism that emerge in the late eighteenth century: Jefferson's nationalism, for instance, cannot be understood without reference to theories of empire. Moreover, the versions of empire that emerge in the language of Washington and Jefferson, as well as, more broadly, in eighteenth-century dramatic and poetic literature, suggest the shifting possibilities that are at stake in versions of empire, particularly with respect to the variety of bodies that comprised the imperial periphery in the eighteenth century. Dramatized in and through these bodies, empire took on a variety of meanings and histories that remain embedded in later American nationalist narratives.

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33
Reading Early American Fiction

Winfried Fluck

Until recently, American literary criticism recommended *not* to read early American fiction. For a criticism that looked for a distinct American literature which would be able to hold its own against European high culture, early American fiction appeared embarrassingly bad. Reading it was thus characterized as an unpleasant, if not downright painful experience which should best be left to the experts who were willing to face the unenviable task in stoic professional self-denial. As I have pointed out at greater length in an essay on theories of the early American novel (Fluck 2000), the explanatory model that was used in dealing with this cultural embarrassment was the "infancy thesis." In following nineteenth-century notions of culture as a process of cultivation, cultural development was conceptualized in terms of slow organic growth and eventual flowering. Such a view of culture also entails a theory of reading. Reading is seen as part of a process of personality formation from infancy to mature adulthood for which uncritical identification and emotional self-indulgence pose the greatest threats. Identification is a characteristically immature mode of reading by readers who have weak egos and still need guidance; that is, above all, children and females (plus the occasional over-sensitive male).

The recent revisionism in American literary studies has changed the perception and status of early American fiction dramatically. With the revisionists' move from primarily aesthetic criteria to political criticism, a formerly much maligned body of texts, treated with condescending amusement at best, has been elevated to the level of an important ideological force. A few scattered novels, produced, in many cases, almost at random and condemned, ridiculed, or ignored at the time of their production, have become "an active agent in the process of cultural hegemony" (Watts 1994: 25). Early American fiction is no longer seen as the infant manifestation of a young nation setting out on a long, ultimately successful course of national and cultural identity formation, but as discourse of a new republic which, despite its democratic rhetoric, established a practice of disenfranchisement that has characterized American society ever since. Such a political reorientation must also change the

role of the professional reader. From being a stoic professional who takes on a task that no one else is willing to perform, she assumes the role of an alert ideological critic who looks for the roots of a history of political disenfranchisement or for first traces of a counter-hegemonial resistance.

Basically, this political criticism has taken two directions. One is best represented by Cathy Davidson's revisionist study *Revolution and the Word*, in which she argues that early American fiction should be understood as an articulation of disenfranchised, marginalized voices: "A number of novelists of the early national period turned the essentially conservative subgenre of the sentimental novel (with its fetishization of female virginity) to a subversive purpose by valorizing precisely those women whom the society had either overtly condemned (the fallen woman) or implicitly rendered invisible (woman as *femme covert*)" (Davidson 1986: 151). Davidson's argument has been submitted to increasing criticism after the move from women's studies to gender studies, in which sentimentalism is now considered as a naturalization of sexual difference, so that Burgett, for example, can say "the problem with Davidson's account of sentimental novels like *The Coquette* is that it replicates Foster's own contribution to the dimorphic logic of the modern sex-gender system." Eliza Wharton's "seduction, her withdrawal from the literary public sphere and, finally, her death narrate the future of a republican citizen who fails to act, in public *and* private, as a properly gendered subject" (Burgett 1998: 95, 107). What Davidson still celebrates as a potentially counter-hegemonic form of recognition, is now seen as interpellation of the reader as "woman," that is, as a sexed subject. (A good summary of the revised and radicalized view of sentimental culture can be found in Samuels 1992.)

A different view is provided by interpretations drawing on the Republicanism/Liberalism debate in American historical writing, which has moved away from Davidson's subversion theory and has led to two opposite readings. Early American fiction is seen either as a manifestation of Republican values, in which communal ideals are formulated and defended against an emerging individualistic ethos, or as exactly the opposite, as avant-garde medium in the establishment of a liberal ideology of individualism that paved the way for the establishment of the liberal nation-state and its capitalist economy. What is perceived as political empowerment by Davidson, presents a case of depoliticization for Steven Watts: "A potential discourse of political perception and power became depoliticized as it was translated into a literary discourse of imaginative, privatized communication" (Watts 1994: 18-19). For Michael Warner, too, the "reader of a novel might have a virtuous orientation, but his or her virtue would be experienced privately rather than in the context of civic action." If there was a subjective experience of empowerment through virtue, then this fulfilled a larger development of political disenfranchisement, for the public of which women were now said to be members was no longer "a public in the rigorous sense of republicanism, and membership in it no longer connoted civil action" (Warner 1990: 150, 173). Women may have gained symbolic access and recognition, but the sphere to which they gained access and in which they received recognition was

already a depoliticized one. Rather than articulating the dissent of the marginalized, the early American novel illustrates what happens to dissent in the American system.

Recent studies of early American fiction testify to the unabated continuity of these fundamental disagreements. In her book *The Plight of Feeling*, Julia Stern continues to argue that early American fiction gives voice to disenfranchised Americans who were otherwise invisible in the official culture of the time: "These tales envision and give voice to the otherwise imperceptible underside of republican culture in the age of reason, offering their newly constituted American audience a gothic and feminized set of counternarratives to read against the male-authored manifest accounts of national legitimation" (Stern 1997: 2). For Elizabeth Barnes, on the other hand, in her *States of Sympathy*, the "burgeoning number of novels written by, about, and ostensibly for women signals in part a growing interest in affective forms of disciplinary control. Liberal constructions of feminine sensibility play a key role in establishing both the methods and the motivations for these controls." A rhetoric of individual empowerment is a first step in a move from coercion to consent, but this move ultimately only "bolsters patriarchal claims to domestic authority" (Barnes 1997: 8, 10).

Critical discussions of early American fiction have passed through three major stages. In the age of formalism, it was considered artistically inferior and illustrates an infant stage of American culture; in feminist criticism, it articulates disenfranchised voices and thus gains a subversive political potential; in recent political criticism, it is either a manifestation of Republican values of participatory democracy or of a nascent ideology of liberal capitalism (including a particular gender politics) that subjects the reader to a hegemonial disciplinary regime. There is no need (and space) to continue the debate here. What is of interest for the purpose of this essay is how the new political criticism conceptualizes the reader of early American fiction, for it is the reader who must realize any political function by making a particular experience with the text that may have a political effect. How do political meanings actually get their politics (in)to the reader? In its almost complete focus on ideological content and function, recent criticism has rarely bothered to address this question. There is, accordingly, no theory of reading. Inevitably, however, there are tacit assumptions about how the reading process takes place and how political meaning and function get transported to, and imbued in, the reader. Davidson's theory of reading, for example, seems to be one of recognition: early American fiction was popular at its time, because the disenfranchised recognized their own plight in these novels. This could also explain why early American fiction had such a bad reputation in literary criticism: literary critics (mostly male) simply did not realize what was going on in these novels because they were not in a position to recognize its conflicts as "realistic." Such critics tend to see a sentimental seduction tale as a mere formula, while female readers, on the other hand, recognize them as "real." Following Philip Fisher, Michelle Burnham characterizes this effect of reading as "identification based on resemblance" (Burnham 1997: 5).

A model of reading as recognition or identification based on resemblance cannot be sufficient for critics who regard early American fiction as contributing to the forma-

tion of national ideologies of individualism or exceptionalism, because the point of their argument is that these texts do something to the reader that the reader herself does not realize or grasp fully. By retreating to her room and by reading a sentimental novel in privacy, the reader may think that she has gained control over her own fantasy-life and thus a new level of self-determination, but in reality she is being socialized into an ideology of liberal individualism, and, hence, into a new disciplinary regime. This reader draws on the novel in a search for self-empowerment, without, however, realizing that this subjectivation is a form of subjection. The names of Althusser and Foucault do not play any major role in the political criticism of early American fiction, but the tacit model of reading on which these political readings are based clearly follows models of interpellation or subject positioning inspired by them. The actual political effect of literature and culture consists in the creation of a subject position. Reading early American fiction means to be interpellated into such a position.

Is the history of the early American novel, then, a story of cunning ideological interpellation? One problem with this argument is that claims about what subject positions or identities are created by early American fiction remain highly contradictory in current criticism. What we get is a multiplicity of divergent, often diametrically opposed readings in which critics hardly seem to agree on anything. Such striking disagreements undermine a model of reading as a form of interpellation, however. Instead of tying the reader to only one identity or position in the text, it is much more plausible to assume that reading is a nomadic activity. As Nancy Roberts claims in her analysis of the role of sympathy, the reader constantly "changes places, assumes roles of both sexes, plays at being hero, plays at being victim" (Roberts 1997: 26). In fact, it can be considered one of the special gratifications of fictional texts that they allow us to move not only between different characters and often conflicting positions, but also to move in and out of characters, to empathize with them at one point and to get angry with them and to reject them at the next. In describing Richardson's *Clarissa* as a long-drawn trial, Roberts points out that readers

> are invited both to identify with and at the same time to judge characters within the text. We are thereby permitted to play the role of criminal, victim, and executioner even as we purportedly learn how to judge, allowing us to experience simultaneously the pleasures and pains of punishment . . . *No one* gets all the punishment and all the blame in this novel. Instead, roles are played interchangeably by one character after another. Punishment and blame, innocence and guilt: characters seem to "try on" these attributes as they might clothing, and through them the readers are able to experience the same freedom, and sometimes, the same pain. (Roberts 1997: 37–8)

Or, as Clover puts it in her analysis of the aesthetic experience of horror: "We are both Red Riding Hood *and* the Wolf; the force of the experience, the horror, comes from 'knowing' both sides of the story" (Clover 1989: 95).

In an essay on representation as a concept of literary analysis, Wolfgang Iser provides a helpful theoretical model for the reader's activity by drawing on the example of a reading of *Hamlet*. Since we have never met Hamlet and do in fact know that he never existed, we have to come up with our own mental images of him. We do this on the basis of the information provided by the text but, inevitably, this mental construct will also draw on our own associations, feelings, and bodily sensations in order to give life to a character who never existed. In the act of reading, the literary text thus comes to represent two things at once: the world of the text and imaginary elements added to it by the reader in the process of giving meaning to the words on the page. And it is exactly this "doubleness" or double reference of fiction that can be seen as an important source of aesthetic experience, because it allows us to do two things at the same time: to articulate imaginary elements and to look at them from the outside. Aesthetic experience is thus a state "in-between" in which, as a result of the doubling structure of fictionality, we are, in Iser's words, "both ourselves and someone else at the same time" so that, in reading, we can be inside and outside a character at once (Iser 1989: 244). The fictional text allows us to enter a character's perspective and perhaps even his or her body; on the other hand, we cannot and do not want to completely give up our own identity. In reading, we thus create other, more expressive versions of ourselves. This is achieved, however, in a much more complex way than suggested by the term identification. One may assume, for the sake of the argument, that it may be possible to "identify" with a character, but one cannot identify with a whole text. It is the text, however, that provides an aesthetic experience, not just single characters in it. Clearly, in actualizing the text in the act of reading, all characters have to be brought to life by means of a transfer, not only the good or sympathetic ones. (This is not to imply that the reader's transfer is restricted to characters. In principle, it concerns every word of the text. I am staying with Iser's example here for the sake of the argument.) The "more expressive version of ourselves" is thus not a simple case of self-aggrandizement through wish-fulfillment, but an extension of our own interiority over a whole (made-up) world.

To clarify these theoretical points, I want to have another look at the three sentimental novels that stand at the center of most discussions of early American fiction: William Hill Brown's *The Power of Sympathy* (1789), Susanna Rowson's *Charlotte Temple* (1791, 1794), and Mrs. Hannah Foster's *The Coquette* (1797). References to other novels such as Charles Brockden Brown's *Jane Talbot* (1801), Rebecca Rush's *Kelroy* (1812), and Susanna Rowson's sequel to *Charlotte Temple*, *Charlotte's Daughter; or, The Three Orphans* (1828), which has become known under the title *Lucy Temple*, can help to sharpen the argument by means of comparison. In my conclusion, I want to return to the current concern with the political meaning and function of early American fiction, for it is, after all, the question of how these politics achieve their goals in the act of reading that provides the impetus for this discussion of possible models of reading early American fiction.

In the context of our discussion, *The Power of Sympathy* is of interest because the new revisionism in American literary studies has led to a reevaluation of the novel's form.

What was long considered an artistic mess, reflecting the awkward beginnings of early American fiction, now reveals unexpected dimensions of multi-perspectivism. As critics have pointed out, the epistolary form is used to create the model of a polite society of letters in which issues of current interest are discussed and evaluated. The novel thus enables the reader to shift positions easily, but this mobility comes at a price: precisely because of its sprawling multi-perspectivism, *The Power of Sympathy* has no clear focus of sympathy, and, hence, as many critics have argued, it does not produce any strong emotional involvement in the minds of its readers.

The case is different in *Charlotte Temple*, which produced an unusually strong emotional involvement on the part of its readers. At first sight, this is surprising, because the novel is not an epistolary novel and has thus given up what was considered a key ingredient for the success of the sentimental novel, the direct access to a character's interiority. Charlotte Temple, the young heroine who elopes with a dashing officer, is seduced by him and then abandoned to a heartbreaking deathbed finale, is presented without a voice of her own and hence almost without any interiority. Throughout the novel, she remains a figure at which we look from the outside. However, the intimacy created by personal letters is not completely lost in the novel. It is provided by a narrator who addresses the reader in motherly fashion and keeps up a running commentary on the melodramatic events with the clear intent of channeling and focusing our sympathies: "A warm, motherly presence, this narrator acts as an editor, moralizer, translator, and guide for her young readers. Rowson eschewed the role of mere passive compiler of letters and, in the process, ensured that Charlotte Temple's voice was not misconstrued or erased" (Forcey 1991: 230). This poses an interesting problem for a discussion of the novel's aesthetic effect because, although the narrator's voice is certainly effective in addressing and guiding the reader, it is hard to imagine that the strong impact the novel had can be attributed exclusively to the narrative voice. The narrative itself, a straightforward tale of victimization, must also play a major part.

In this respect, the authorial decision not to give the heroine a voice of her own reveals unexpected advantages, for it is the basis for a series of intensely melodramatic tableaux. In her introduction to a recent edition of *Charlotte Temple*, Ann Douglas emphasizes the striking pictorial dimension of melodrama in the novel. In its strongly gestural dimension, melodrama reaches not only beyond the conversational structures of the epistolary novel "to those who did not yet possess the skills of literacy," but also beyond the limits of language itself to the "primal language" of the body:

> It is crucial to melodrama, which began in wordless pantomime set to music, that body and heart take up the work of articulation at the point that language fails. Increasingly, as the noose of Charlotte's fate and Rowson's story tightens, the book turns into tableaux . . . Charlotte repeatedly uses stock melodramatic gestures, which Rowson inserts almost as if they were stage directions. She "clasps her hands" in supplication, "lifts her eyes in prayer," kneels "in shame," and "faints" away in agony. (Douglas 1991: xii, xxxvii)

These "visual summaries of emotional situations" offer an opportunity for intense forms of aesthetic experience, because they provide new means for triggering a transfer on the reader's side. It is precisely because we see a person suffering who cannot speak for herself and therefore often uses body language to express herself that we are stimulated to supply that which is not articulated. The less the heroine herself can express her pain, the more we have to draw on our own interiority in order to understand her. Charlotte's interiority is a blank which stimulates us to invest strong feelings of our own. In this sense, an interaction between different positions within the novel is created: the sprawling, occasionally diffuse multi-perspectivism of *The Power of Sympathy* is replaced by a streamlined back-and-forth movement between the positions of motherly guardian figure and the inarticulate, childlike victim.

Of the three novels, *The Coquette* uses the multivocal potential of the epistolary novel most consistently and most effectively. The novel follows the ideal of an ongoing polite conversation about issues of virtue that constitutes its own model of a Republican public sphere. By presenting this exchange through letters, the novel manages to represent a variety of different positions without intrusive didactic hierarchization. In addition, there is a recovery of one of the major achievements of the genre of the sentimental novel. The great achievement of Richardson was his discovery that epistolarity would be ideally suited to represent the inner life of characters. In *The Power of Sympathy* the uneven, unfocused use of the epistolary structure works against that potential. In contrast, *The Coquette* links polite exchange on questions of virtue and insights into the inner life of its main characters much more successfully. In striking contrast to seducer figures like Harrington in *The Power of Sympathy*, who is hardly more than an intertextual collage, and Belcour in *Charlotte Temple*, who is uncompromisingly villainous, in *The Coquette* even the seducer Sanford eventually gains a psychological dimension of his own, just as, on the other hand, the heroine Eliza Wharton is not presented as mere victim but as a basically sympathetic, but often irresponsible, individual who overreaches. Simple moral dichotomies are avoided and this, in turn, invites the reader to shift positions frequently. Several critics have pointed out, for example, how a crucial scene of the novel, Boyer's encounter with Eliza and Sanford in the garden which leads to the withdrawal of Boyer's marriage proposal, is consecutively presented from the point of view of all three characters involved. As readers, we are thus in constant movement between different characters that are given due hearing.

The reader's involvement, however, is not simply a matter of multi-perspectivism. Before we start moving between different positions of the text, we have to have reasons to get involved at all. Involvement depends on curiosity for the fate of the characters, or, to be more precise, on an ability of the reader, the proverbial onlooker, to invest sympathy in what happens to others. As several recent discussions of the sentimental novel in the early Republic have pointed out, the idea of sympathy played a crucial role in the philosophy and social theory of the eighteenth century. The significance of the concept goes far beyond a plea for showing compassion for those who have "fallen." In a pluralistic contract society, in which society is no longer ruled

by papal or royal decree, decisions can only be reached by a process of social interaction – which, in turn, depends on the ability of individuals to imagine what others, and especially strangers, might think and feel: "As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation" (Smith 1817: 2). For Adam Smith, sympathy

> is the human faculty of compassion or fellow-feeling. By use of imagination, one individual sympathizes with another and feels what the other feels. What makes this feasible is the commonplace idea, but one particularly prominent in the Enlightenment, of the uniformity of human nature. Thus upon hearing that someone's father has died, one is able to sympathize, even if the bereaved is a complete stranger. (Berry 1990: 123)

Clearly, this is a situation that we also encounter in reading where the reader witnesses the fates and fortunes of characters whom she has not met before and does not know. Reading, in effect, is an exemplary activity for putting oneself in the place of someone else. This is why reading a novel can be conceptualized in the eighteenth century as a

> school of sympathy, a place in which emotions are coached and disciplined, marshalled and pointed in the right direction. Readers see sympathy displayed through the performance of certain key characters who show us how we, in turn, might perform it. Reading is the performance through which we get a chance to rehearse such feelings, try different roles, play out various emotional responses. (Roberts 1997: 10)

Such "instruction in feeling and subjectivity" can include "cross-gender identification" (ibid: 11). For the early American Republic, the faculty of sympathy thus held the promise of forming a political community not based on religious or political loyalties but on social contract.

If sympathy was a "building block of a democratic nation" (Barnes 1997: x), then this attitude had to be cultivated and practiced. Novels seemed ideally suited to provide instructions in sympathy and to function as training grounds for developing a sense of sympathy, because the faculty of sympathy depends on the imagination. As many critics have pointed out, this was, in effect, the "official" project of the sentimental novel in the New Republic. The question remained how this could best be achieved. For Smith, sympathy "does not arise so much from the view of the passion, as from that of the situation which excites it" (Smith 1817: 5). Consequently, if the novel is to be made a medium for developing sympathy, then it has to create situations which provoke and engage our sympathy. The sentimental tale of victimization is ideally suited to achieve this, because it is based on a broken promise of contract. As Jan Lewis (1987) and other critics have pointed out, marriage as a form of social organization based on affection and thus founded on mutual sympathy had become a model of society in the early Republic. In luring the heroine of the sentimental novel with a promise of marriage and then disregarding his promise, the seducer betrays one of the highest ideals of the new Republic: he violates the

nourishing utopia of mutual sympathy. However, this creation of sympathy through the violation of a moral ideal created an obvious difficulty. The problem arises from the fact that the very faculty on which the novel depends to create sympathy, the imagination, can also become the source of misperception and misconstructions. It is "by the imagination only," writes Smith, "that we can form any conception of what are his [a "brother" suffering torture] sensations" (Smith 1817: 2). The imagination, however, can easily be deceived or manipulated. How can one be sure, for example, that the reader does not sympathize with the seducer? In using seduction as an example for moral instruction, the imagination may be stimulated in entirely unforeseen ways. Early American novels are thus not merely "schools of sympathy." They also illustrate the possible dangers and pitfalls of sympathy.

This double-sidedness of the faculty of sympathy explains the strong anti-fictional rhetoric that pervades early American fiction. Defining themselves against romances which manipulate the reader's imagination and trap her in foolish daydreams, these early novels recommend themselves by their claim not to be fictions but, as in the case of *Charlotte Temple*, "a tale of truth," designed to provide instructions for female education. Novels, it was argued, could help moral education by employing special powers of illustration. As one of the characters in *The Power of Sympathy* observes: "Didactic essays are not always capable of engaging the attention of young ladies. We fly from the labored precepts of the essayist to the sprightly narrative of the novelist" (Brown 1970: 77). However, critics also agree that, as a consequence of its extended fictional elements, the sentimental novel became more than merely a piece of republican instruction. This has repeatedly given rise to the suspicion that the sentimental novel's striking popularity should perhaps not be attributed to its didactic goals but to the fact that it represented "unspeakable acts" under the guise of moral instruction. The original frontispiece of *The Power of Sympathy* provides an example of this unacknowledged stimulation effect. In words of varying size and graphic arrangement, it asserts *The Power of Sympathy* is "intended to represent the specious Causes, and to Expose the fatal Consequences of SEDUCTION." By capitalizing and foregrounding that against which the novel claims to warn the reader, namely SEDUCTION, the preface decontextualizes the key word visually and elevates it to the status of an isolated signifier of desire. A dutiful apology is thus turned into a clever advertisement. Already in his analysis of the epistolary voyeurism of the Richardsonian prototype, Ian Watt had pointed to this effect when he called *Pamela* "a work that could be praised from the pulpit and yet attacked as pornography, a work that gratified the reading public with the combined attraction of a sermon and a striptease" (Watt 1967: 173). Or: "A seductive program is condemned so that a seductive program can be pursued" (Chambers 1984: 217).

From the point of view of implied reader activities, however, a case can be made that the didactic discourse does not merely function as a cover for other goals. It serves an important function in the reader's involvement. The sentimental novel obviously needed both elements, the imaginary appeal of seduction and the containment of this appeal by a moral claim. They are, in fact, interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

Interdependent because, without seductive elements, the novel would be merely another moral tract; hence the turn to fiction with its possibilities of imaginary boundary-crossing. Where transgressive aspects are pushed too far, on the other hand, the text is in danger not only of losing its social acceptability but also of endangering the reader's self-respect. The moral and the seductive are mutually reinforcing because, as we have seen, the moral discourse draws its renewed authority from its response to a transgression, just as, on the other hand, moral claims stimulate imagining possible violations. Fiction, in fact, can be seen as a privileged place for negotiating such conflicting claims, because, as Wolfgang Iser has pointed out, "the various acts of fictionalizing carry with them whatever has been outstripped, and the resultant doubleness might therefore be defined as the simultaneity of the mutually exclusive" (Iser 1989: 239). What characterizes the sentimental novel as a form of fiction is thus not duplicity but doubleness. In a paradox that, I think, is characteristic of fiction in general, although to varying degrees, the challenge the sentimental novel has to meet is to contain exactly those imaginary elements which provide the basis for its appeal. Hence, the novel moves incessantly between the two positions of the guardian and the seducer which function as *mise en abymes* for two conflicting functions of the novel (Fluck 1990). If the novel would only be read as warning and thus function as successful containment of the imaginary, it would support the work of the book's guardian figures and would, in fact, function as a guardian itself. If, on the other hand, the novel stimulates the reader's imaginary longing so strongly that this level dominates the reception, it would join the ranks of the seducer who skillfully manipulates the reader's hunger for articulation and makes her disregard the guardian's warnings. And since the seducer "is so obviously at fault in what he is doing" (Roberts 1997: 39), the text has to protect itself from the charge of being a seducer. Its challenge thus lies in the skillful balance it manages to sustain between the two.

The Power of Sympathy, for example, can be read as a novel in search of such a balance. It starts out with a "promise" of seduction but quells it immediately in order to demonstrate the saving power of sympathy. The would-be seducer Harrington is so touched by his potential victim Harriot that he gives up his plan of seduction within a few pages. After squandering this first opportunity, the novel therefore has to move on to a new set of characters. In this second try, however, the seduction theme does not become a narrative focus either. Instead, it is employed as a passing illustration of moral failure and relegated to a footnote. In removing the transgressive impulse to the "underground" of the text and thus creating a clear split (and graphic hierarchization) between its upper and nether world, the text dramatizes the difficulties it has in establishing an effective interaction between transgressive impulse and its narrative containment. However, despite the strong dominance of conversational elements in the polite tradition, *The Power of Sympathy* returns to the seduction motif again and again. In its various trial runs, the novel seems to be continuously in search of a form of expression that would be able to articulate "seductive" imaginary elements without becoming too seductive itself. As a consequence, the motif of seduction comes up

repeatedly in scattered passages of the novel: a long footnote in letter XI on the case of Eliza Whitman; the Ophelia episode (letters XXI–XXIII and frontispiece), the story of Fidelia (letters XXVII and XXVIII), and the "History of Maria" (letter XXXIX). There are several unconvincing and unsuccessful attempts, until the novel finally settles on a representation which is sufficiently explicit, and yet, it seems, still presentable within the context of polite society: it is the mother of Harriot who was seduced in her youth and is thus the novel's actual victim of seduction. In focusing on a seduction that has happened a long time ago, the issue of seduction can be presented as achieved fact and not be dramatized as temptation. In its search for an acceptable expression of the transgressive impulse, the novel, after numerous delays and digressions, finally arrives at a version that distances the event twice. It is this strategy of removal and containment, this failure to put up a real struggle, which prevents the novel from establishing an effective interaction between the imaginary and its containment and which explains its lack of success. Since the closest Harriot comes to being the heroine of a sentimental tale of seduction is by being the offspring of an illicit act, *The Power of Sympathy* has no sentimental heroine who is torn between temptation and resistance and caught in a conflict between independence and obedience.

If *The Power of Sympathy* is too cautious, *The Coquette* impresses by being remarkably daring. This is already noticeable in the novel's opening, for the death of her fiancé is not experienced as a disastrous blow by the heroine Eliza Wharton, but as potential liberation. In striking contrast to the sentimental tradition, the death of a major guardian figure is not presented as cruel and painful separation. Rather, it sets the heroine free to pursue her own quest for independence. This independence can only be gained at a risk, however, because it leads to the attribute of a coquette. This ominously "French" attribute is not an entirely negative term at the beginning of the novel, but it is one that already reflects a tension. In the novel, it carries associations of a sympathetic hunger for life, and yet it also points to a risky gamble over which the heroine may lose her control. The conflict between potential self-empowerment and inadvertent self-destruction is thus already expressed in the unstable semantics of the key word of the book. The novel presents Eliza's struggle for independence with many remarkable insights and without any sententious condemnation of her hunger for life. In this sense, the text manages to articulate a wish for self-assertion and self-empowerment in a much more open and daring way than the other novels discussed here. In publishing Eliza's letters and thoughts, it makes such wishes public and presents them as social attitudes that deserve a hearing. This is done, however, only on the basis of an idea of the public sphere in which private wishes are open to public debate and correction. When the heroine stops to write letters and becomes increasingly secretive and inaccessible, her retreat begins to isolate her socially and leaves only the seducer Sanford as possible companion. What makes *The Coquette* such a remarkable book thus also creates a problem of narrative containment. In trying to reconceptualize self-determination not simply as sure recipe for self-destruction but also as a promise of individual independence, the

novel itself has become a coquette, one that has almost gone too far and can only redeem itself by a restitution of the sentimental convention of symbolic punishment. By paying the expected price for her "hunger," Eliza finally becomes a true sentimental heroine and can be redeemed in a way the traditional coquette cannot. Obviously, a way in which her striving for independence could be seen in positive terms and no longer as coquetry cannot yet be imagined. The melodrama at the heart of the sentimental tale of seduction is governed by an either-or logic of moral choices. One of the remarkable things about *The Coquette* is that it works against this dichotomy for a large part of the narrative. But in the end, it falls back on it in order to safeguard its heroine's reputation and its own standing with the reader.

In political criticism of early American fiction, questions of "complicity," "cooptation," and "containment" are usually discussed without any consideration of the reading process. A novel without temptation and the promise of imaginary seduction would be uninteresting; a novel without moral and symbolic containment would be experienced as overpowering and threatening. The reader has to be able to get into the fiction and out of it. She wants both: the lure of boundary-crossing but also the security of distance. The role of a mere onlooker is not sufficient. The reader wants to enter the novel as imaginary participant. However, where events get too close for comfort, she also wants to be able to move back to the role of observer. The reception of fiction requires both: on the one hand, an abandonment to invented occurrences and, on the other, the evaluative attitude of the onlooker. (For a more detailed discussion of this aspect of the reading of fiction, see Appleyard 1991.) If they are successful, sentimental novels can be emotionally gripping. If they are gripping, however, they also pose the problem for the reader of how to "get out" at the right time. This, in fact, is one of the major functions of endings such as the deathbed scene in novels like *Charlotte Temple*, which provide the reader with an opportunity to move back to the position of someone who looks at the heroine from the outside and knows that she has to part from her. In *The Power of Sympathy* and *The Coquette* this same function is fulfilled by gravestones and their inscriptions which stand at the end of the two novels and offer the reader the role of the "weeping friend." The possibility of dissociation is crucial here. From the point of view of the reading experience, plot elements such as a restitution of social order, the containment of a transgressive impulse, or punishment by death should not be understood literally, but as necessary forms of reader dissociation. By means of fiction, she can enter "dangerous," conflict-laden worlds, but also stay outside and on top of them – and hence cross boundaries without loss of respectability and self-esteem.

Such considerations allow us to describe the strengths and weaknesses of the three novels discussed here from yet another perspective in order to account for the different degrees of popularity and critical appreciation they have found. One of the reasons why *The Power of Sympathy* has been the least popular and least accepted of the three can be seen in the fact that it is a novel which makes imaginary participation and "abandonment" difficult. Because the theme of seduction is constantly displaced in a supplementary chain of announcements and cancellations, there is no central focus for

the reader's imaginary participation. And because it is difficult to "get in," we remain in the role of a mere observer who eventually gets impatient or frustrated with the novel's constant distancing. In *Charlotte Temple*, on the other hand, there is a strong stimulation for imaginary involvement, but, at the same time, there are several distancing devices provided by the narrator. Paradoxically enough, however, this works to the advantage of the novel's effectiveness, as Ann Douglas points out:

> Rowson's often-noted authorial intrusions in *Charlotte Temple* (there are nine full-scale ones) at first glance read like moralizings directed against the tenor of the story. Her constant command to her readers is not to do what Charlotte did . . . But in fact each authorial remark is designed to clear away, not reinforce, the obstacles that lie between Rowson's readers and full identification with the story. She meets the objections of "sober matrons," men "of philosophic temperament," frowning "madams," any "sir" who "cavils" at the accuracy of the account, even her dear "young, volatile readers" who may be growing restless . . . Each authorial intrusion screws up reader involvement another notch, and Rowson herself suffers with her story. (Douglas 1991: xxvi)

Since Charlotte is not strongly individualized, imaginary projection is facilitated, while preventing, at the same time, the novel's "nightmare of dislocation, alienation, and abandonment" (Forcey 1991: 227) being experienced as too overwhelming. On the other hand, since the reader is not on intimate terms with Charlotte's thoughts and feelings, dissociation from her and a move back to the role of observer remain always possible.

In contrast, the epistolary form of *The Coquette* positions us closely to the heroine and her point of view, but also confronts her own views with a variety of different perspectives. As a result, our attitude toward the heroine is ambivalent from the start. We can never determine with certainty to what extent we can trust her judgment. Since we get a number of equally convincing interpretations of her behavior from others, we do not really know what attitude to take toward her. The novel leaves us guessing for a considerable time whether we should establish distance to the heroine or not, and then, when that distance has perhaps already become too strong, it has to reactivate emotional involvement in a rather forced and hurried manner. Thus, Foster has to labor hard at the end to resemanticize punishment as victimization. From what is already a nascent novel of manners, in which the individual's interaction with society is the actual drama, the novel has to move back to a traditional seduction plot. In the end, it turns the proto-individualist heroine back into a sentimental victim. As a result of this generic instability, the reader has to make several readjustments that complicate her attitude toward the novel. The fact that the novel was popular in its time and is still well-respected today, does not contradict this view, because both types of readers, the traditional and the modern one, can find "their" heroine in the text.

The shifting, unstable relations between identification and distance also explain the entirely different strategies of characterization we find in the three novels. In keeping

with its distancing strategy, *The Power of Sympathy* has no single central character, *Charlotte Temple* has a heroine taken from melodrama whom we largely see from the outside, so that the reader can identify with her and yet keep an awareness of a stage performance (commented upon by the narrator), while *The Coquette* anticipates the detailed characterization of the novel of manners in which the reader becomes participant in a series of conversational exchanges which reveal a heroine in the process of development. All three strategies of characterization redefine the reader's position toward the text, and change the relation between participation and observation. In the case of *The Power of Sympathy* a priority of observation and distance prevails, *Charlotte Temple* manages to establish an effective balance between participation and observation, and *The Coquette* is characterized by shifts in emphasis that provide an uneven reading experience. Charlotte Temple is still almost a child when we first encounter her and does not change throughout the novel, because such a change would affect her status as victim. Eliza Wharton, on the other hand, who is already 26 when we first meet her, is a young woman in search of independence. The one we can only pity: her "enormous pathos in the later portions of her story comes from our sense of her as a helpless child" (Douglas 1991: xxviii). With Eliza we can argue; but while we argue, we can also suspend our emotional and imaginary engagement more easily and reconsider our attitude toward the heroine. This makes *The Coquette* a more modern text than *Charlotte Temple* and explains the higher estimation in which it is held today. However, while *The Coquette* may be the more modern text, *Charlotte Temple* was experienced as the more forceful one for a long time.

So far, the argument, in following a transfer theory of reading (in contrast to an interpellation theory), has focused on the shifting balance between sympathetic involvement and distance in order to explain the differences in the novels' structure and appeal, but also to describe early American fiction as a still tentative attempt to develop a strategy of reader involvement; that is, to transform it into a "school of sympathy." As we have seen, the sentimental novel is more than a cautionary tale warning young women against the possibility of seduction; it also draws on the imaginary appeal of the word. However, as an imaginary object, I suggest, "seduction" should not be taken too literally in the discussion of the sentimental novel of the early Republic – nor should be the warnings against it. The fact that the "scandalous" case of Eliza Whitman served as a recurring point of reference for these novels "founded on fact" gives an indication that seduction and elopement were not exactly everyday events in the social world of the genre's readers. The status of the factual incidents is not that of "contemporary reality," but that of contemporary scandals; that is, already a fictionalized mode. The novel was not created to reflect real incidents; rather, real incidents were used to authenticate the novel.

It would also be reductionist to narrow down the imaginary temptation and appeal of the sentimental tale of seduction to the dimension of repressed desire or displaced sexual wish-fulfillment (see Rust 2003). The attraction the seducer Montraville holds for the innocent, still rather childlike Charlotte Temple does not lie in a promise of sexual adventure. The temptation Montraville presents to Charlotte is of quite

another nature. In the world of the sentimental novel, the seducer is a man of the world. Often, he is by far the most impressive and attractive man of the whole lot. What makes the offer of the seducer so tempting is that to be "chosen" by such a man for a companion presents a highly flattering distinction for the heroine. For Eliza Wharton, the attraction of Sanford lies in his appearance as "extraordinary man": "What shall I say about this extraordinary man? Shall I own to you, my friend, that he is pleasing to me? His person, his manners, his situation: all combine to charm my fancy and, to my lively imagination, strew the path of life with flowers" (Foster 1939: 148). Through this choice, the heroine receives a recognition that she has never experienced before. The crucial scene of many sentimental tales of seduction is therefore not the seduction itself but the elopement. This elopement is not an acting out of sexual desire. Its major temptation lies in the prospect that, by eloping, the heroine gains importance, because she has been asked by a man of distinction and higher standing to become his companion and, possibly, his wife.

In this sense, the seduction plot of the sentimental novel is basically a failed marriage plot, as Rachel Brownstein makes clear in her perceptive description of the imaginary appeal of the marriage plot: "The marriage plot most novels depend on is about finding validation of one's uniqueness and importance by being singled out among all other women by a man. The man's love is proof of the girl's value, and payment for it" (Brownstein 1982: xv). In this fantasy of being chosen, the sentimental novel retains a faint echo of the Cinderella tale; however, in a "realistic" version in the sense that the issue of choice – and the price one has to pay for wrong choices – moves to the center of the narrative. Eliza Wharton's letter to Lucy Sumner leaves no doubt about this: "He lives in all the magnificence of a prince; and why should I, who can doubtless share that magnificence if I please, forego the advantages and indulgences it offers, merely to gratify those friends who pretend to be better judges of my happiness than I am myself?" (Foster 1939: 201). The marriage plot fails in the sentimental tale of seduction because the heroine – often against her better judgment – violates social rules in her desire for special recognition. To marry Boyer is not sufficient, it has to be Sanford, the "extraordinary man." The punishment she receives is also a punishment for the fantasy of personal triumph which led to her concessions to the seducer.

And yet, clearly, although the heroine is severely criticized for her behavior, the reader is nevertheless on her side. The reason, I suggest, is that her act is not only one of moral but also of social boundary-crossing. It is an act of disobedience generated by a drive for individual recognition, that is, for being recognized as "unique" – which the reader shares, in effect, because it is exactly this search that has driven her to the fictional text and its promise of imaginary self-expansion in the first place. For the young female reader, the sentimental novel, probably for the first time in literary history, put her own fantasy life at the center of the literary text and thus acknowledged her as a potential "heroine." The fact that the novel can be taken to one's room and read privately must have nourished this sense of importance, because it contained a promise of control over the mental processing of the novel's imaginary elements

without interference from parents or other guardian figures. On the other hand, this increase in control seems to have been one of the major sources of irritation for critics of the new genre, so that the major source of harm caused by the reading of sentimental novels is usually attributed to its "untutored" use, that is, to the dangers and risks of independence which the young female reader cannot yet handle. The actual "temptation" the sentimental novel dramatizes thus lies in the search for recognition and imaginary self-empowerment. And the danger is also spelt out (melodramatically): individualization leads to separation, to a loss of community against which the heroines of the sentimental novel are defenseless. Hence, in order to protect the reader from this same fate, distance and the possibility of dissociation are crucial.

In its transformation of the sentimental heroine from mere victim to a character who is actively, though yet unsuccessfully, struggling for independence, *The Coquette* anticipates the transition from the sentimental tale of seduction to the novel of manners and the domestic novel, the two dominant novelistic genres of women's literature in the first half of the nineteenth century. This transition took place soon after the belated beginnings of the American novel and ended the relatively short reign of the sentimental novel. The reason, I suggest, is that these genres opened up new possibilities for the project that also lay at the center of the sentimental novel, namely the struggle for recognition by means of imaginary self-empowerment. For this search, the sentimental novel is of considerable, but ultimately limited, use. Its limitations become obvious if one asks the question how the heroine can protect herself against the fate "worse than death" that may result from her transgression. The only answer the sentimental novel seems to offer is to return to the fold of patriarchal guardianship. In this way, a vicious circle is established: the only protection against betrayal and deception is provided by complete trust in, and dependence on, the judgment of one's guardian. The sentimental heroine can only transfer her dependence from one guardian figure to another. However, it is exactly this lack of independence which puts the heroine in constant danger of falling prey to the deceptive maneuvers of the seducer, because she lacks any social experience of her own.

In the long run, this limited choice between two forms of dependencies could not provide a satisfactory model. Once the novel had been established as a privileged medium for imaginary self-empowerment in the early Republic, the sentimental tale of seduction was therefore replaced in the favor of its readers by genres that promised to be more useful and effective for that purpose. The best protection against dependency is the development of a social self which can only be acquired, however, in a long-drawn learning process. The sentimental novel is thus replaced by the novel of social apprenticeship in which a sense of self-worth is no longer gained by a victimization that cries out for sympathy, but by the strength of the individual to control her impulses and to gradually correct her own faults. A novel like Charles Brockden Brown's sentimental novel *Jane Talbot* can illustrate this point. To base recognition on the power of strong feelings, as Jane Talbot does, also means to create a state of utter dependency: "What is it, my friend, that makes thy influence over me so

absolute? No resolution of mine can stand against your remonstrances. A single word, a look, approving or condemning, transforms me into a new creature... So easily swayed am I by one that is the lord of my affections. No will, no reason have I of my own." In another letter to Colden, Jane writes: "Never was a creature so bereft of all dignity; all steadfastness. The slave of every impulse: blown about by the predominant gale; a scene of eternal fluctuation" (Brown 1986: 256, 357). Replacing such infantile longings for fusion, linked with melodramatic fears of separation, self-esteem in the novel is eventually established in a process of social interaction in which the heroine learns to overcome her emotional vulnerability. Similarly, in Rebecca Rush's *Kelroy*, published only a decade after *The Coquette*, the reason for the sorry fate of the fair, lovely, and almost perfect Emily Hammond no longer resides in the cunning designs of a seducer. There is no seducer figure far and wide in the novel. Rather, Emily's fate must be blamed on that figure who still functioned as the heroine's only unwavering source of protection in the sentimental novel, the guardian figure. As a consequence, Rush's novel establishes an entirely new version of the theme of seduction. In *Kelroy* it is no longer the illusory lure of temptations that leads to the heroine's "fall," but the people who know these illusions and can manipulate them for their own purposes. In this new world of almost imperceptible, "civilized" forms of deception and manipulation, protection for the heroine can no longer come from reliance on her guardian, who is – in striking anticipation of James – one of the master manipulators herself. It can only come from the development of a "social imagination" and social skills that would enable the heroine to imagine the possibility and the scope of such deceptions.

Surprisingly, it is Susanna Rowson who offers a solution that points to a new and stable generic convention. One of the remarkable aspects of *Lucy Temple*, Rowson's sequel to *Charlotte Temple*, is how far the novel is already removed from the sentimental formula, although it initially appears to provide yet another version of it in the intertextual echo of its title. But, contrary to expectations, the novel is unswerving in its strategy of de-melodramatization. The daughter of the unhappy Charlotte Temple is not another victim, but somebody who successfully overcomes a string of potential disasters. The strength which Lucy demonstrates comes out of her successful socialization in the family circle of the Reverend Mr. Matthews, a world full of "humdrum daily-life talk of cakes and ale, its birthday feasts of hams and pies and plum puddings" (Douglas 1991: xxxviii). This is the world of the novel of manners, in which the cultivation of sympathy is now tied to the purpose of social apprenticeship and the development of an individual identity. Douglas therefore calls *Lucy Temple* a *bildungsroman*, "a portrayal of traditional processes of development and self-assessment" (ibid: xli). While the sentimental novel reenacts a pattern of emotional agitation that, eventually, leads to exhaustion, the novel of social apprenticeship (a term I would prefer to that of the *bildungsroman* because it is broader and includes a variety of nineteenth-century genres such as the novel of manners, the domestic novel,

local color fiction, and the realistic novel) follows a pattern of growing insight and, often, increasing self-control.

In the US, the domestic novel emerged as one of the dominant versions of the novel of social apprenticeship. In its drive to replace an aesthetics based on the idea of sympathy with one aiming at the development of an inner emotional economy, the domestic novel bears striking similarities to the most successful male genres at the time, the frontier romance. Such a claim may seem odd, because it links two genres that are often openly hostile towards each other. Feminist criticism has emphasized that frontier romances such as Cooper's Leatherstocking novels establish an ideal of supreme emotional control, while domestic novels favor emotional release and often indulge in outbursts of tears. Hence we find a seemingly never-ending series of sobbing, weeping, and strong emotional outbursts in a novel like Susan Warner's *The Wide, Wide World*, often regarded as the exemplary domestic novel in American culture and as one of the supreme tear-jerkers of American literature. However, a closer look at the role these moments of emotional release play in the novel reveals that they are created to teach a lesson, namely that of the necessity of self-discipline. Jane Tompkins (1985) therefore describes the domestic novel as an emotional training ground in which characters as well as readers have to go through recurring patterns of strong emotional responses and the subsequent insight that such impulses have to be controlled, a process in which an unruly little child is gradually turned into a mature and widely respected young woman. This process of apprenticeship draws on images of triumphant self-enhancement in the presence of a father figure, and emotional symbiosis with a mother figure, but both of these forms of imaginary self-empowerment have to be earned in an often painful process of self-denial and psychic self-regulation. In a paradoxical structure, self-sacrifice and self-submission thus become sources of distinction and self-esteem. One would hesitate, however, to call this selfhood. In the novel, the final recognition of the heroine is deserved, because she has won a victory over herself. But her worth is measured by her readiness for self-denial; that is, by her ability to extinguish all traces of her own individuality and selfhood.

The transformation of the sentimental novel into the domestic novel seems to provide an unforeseen complication for an interpretation of early American fiction in terms of a "self-empowering" reader mobility. On the representational level, the search for recognition is now linked to an ideal of self-discipline; that is, to an attitude which revisionist criticism regards as a form of voluntary submission to power. On the formal level, this move is connected with a retreat from multi-perspectivism – and hence from a formal device which can stimulate and guide the movement of readers between different characters and positions. This raises the interesting question what reader activities the domestic novel actually implies. Obviously, it is strongly heroine centered. In contrast to the epistolary novel, the heroine and her social sphere are no longer on an equal footing. One of the recurrent

strategies of the domestic novel is to demonstrate how the heroine is misunderstood, so that we are inclined to take her side and take great interest in how she manages to deal with this injustice. Nevertheless, in terms of aesthetic effect, the main point about the domestic novel is not the creation of an intense emotional bond, but the connection of moments of release with a counter-move of control, resulting in a constant tension between a promise of recognition and its disappointment, between wish-fulfillment and rejection. The heroine and the reader are linked by the search for recognition; at the same time, they are also constantly referred back to the condition on which this recognition depends, namely the acceptance of the need for self-regulation.

In this constant move back and forth between promise and delay, the domestic novel produces something like an emotional see-saw effect, in which the imagination and the emotions of the reader are strongly stimulated and then linked with the lesson that one has to learn to control oneself in order to be able to deal with the disappointment of being misunderstood and not recognized in one's true value. The self-discipline which the heroine learns to exercise thus also becomes a model for the reading process. Both heroine and reader have to learn to be patient, both are drawn into an apprenticeship in self-regulation. The theory of effect inherent in the sentimental novel is that the reader will be driven to self-control by fear of separation, the theory of the domestic novel is that the ups and downs of the search for self-discipline will function as a kind of training ground for the formation of an inner emotional economy. The reader's "work" consists in internalizing this emotional economy. The cultivation of mutual sympathy is replaced by a lesson in internalization.

Such a reading seems to confirm revisionist interpretations that see the political function of early American fiction in a move from coercion to the skillful creation of consent by affective forms. I think, indeed, that analyses which point out that self-regulation and internalization take the role of coercion in modern societies and that culture plays a crucial role in this transition are convincing. The point of disagreement is not that such mechanisms are at work but what their function is. A view of internalization exclusively in terms of an increasing disciplinary regime disregards the sense of self-possession and self-empowerment which the individual can gain through self-regulation. In the realistic novel and American local color fiction, renunciation, as a supreme form of self-control, can become a source of self-esteem, because it finally provides immunity against the emotional manipulation of others. The individual gains independence and a sense of self because she establishes a source of self-worth that lies outside the manipulative grasp of either seducer or guardian figure. Seen this way, the domestic and the realistic novel are still responses to early American fiction. Conversely, if early American fiction is part of a historical moment in which cultural forms of individualization are ushered in, then it can also help us understand why these forms could gain such a cultural force. As long as the current political criticism does not try to understand this phenomenon, it will be helpless in the face of it.

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